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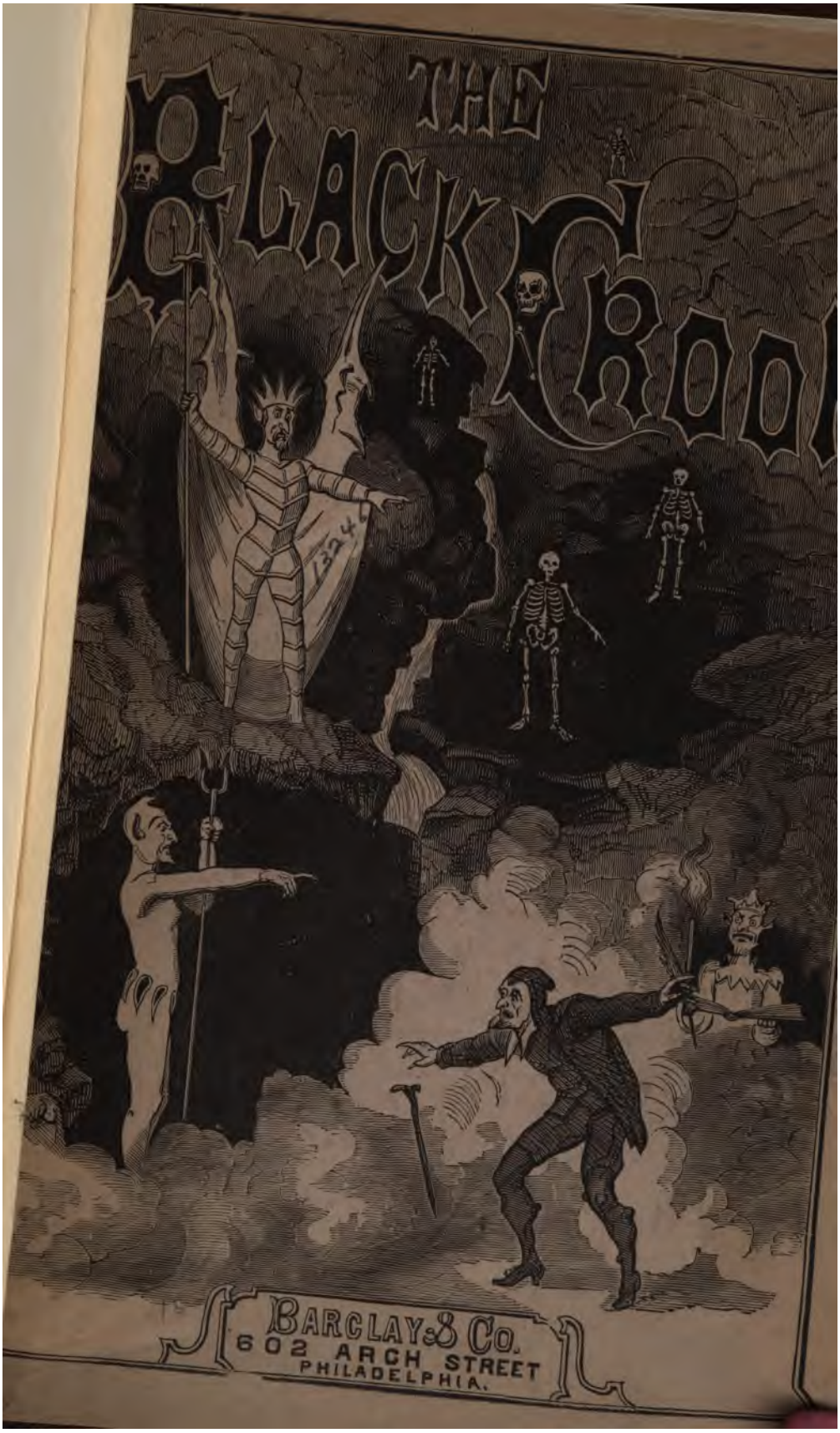
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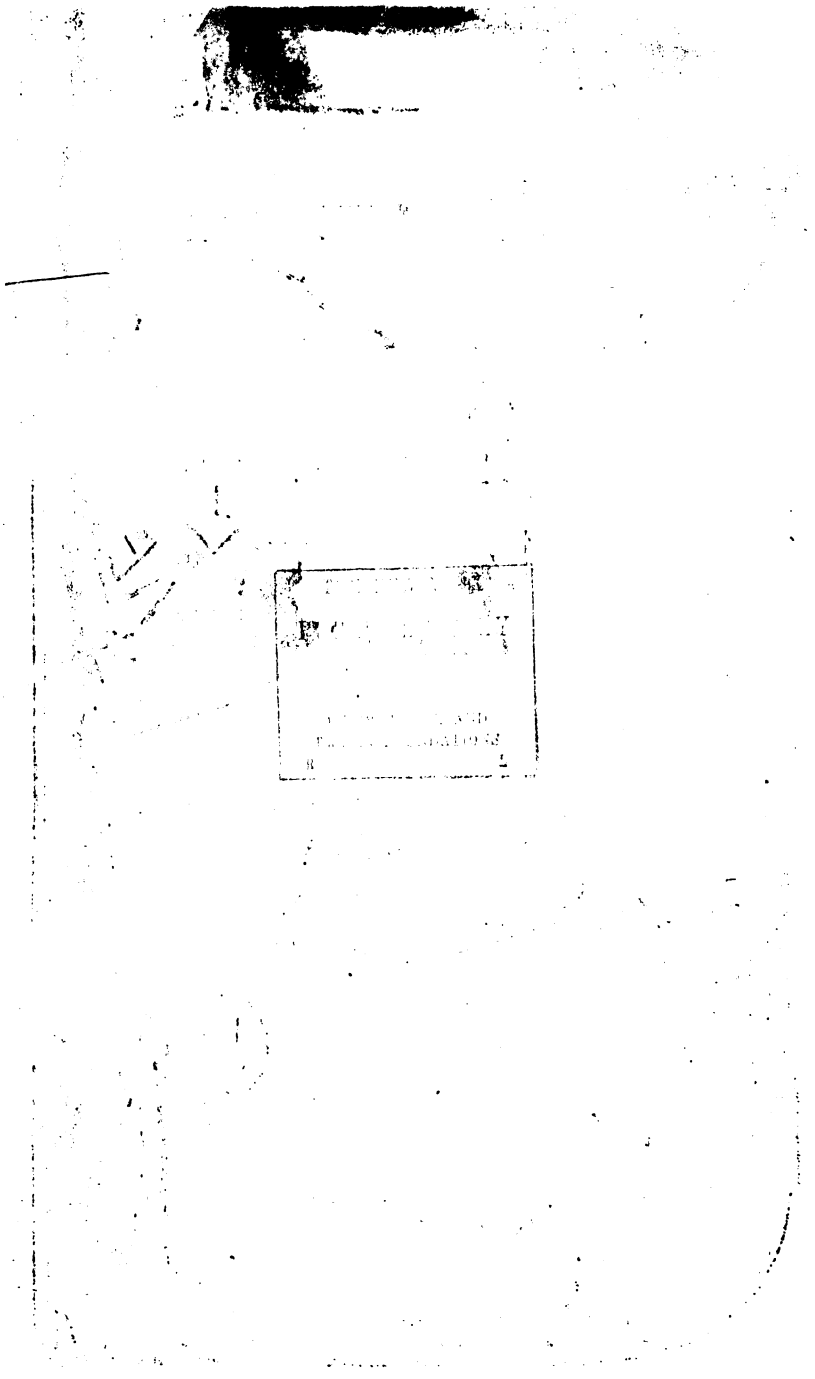

THE

BLACK CROOK,

A MOST

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THE

BLACK CROOK,

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MOST WONDERFUL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

COUNT PALFI, AND HIS BOUDOIR.

"Lord, sir, you could scarcely believe it, but the whole world seems to have been ransacked to furnish that room; you saw porcelain from the East Indies, vases from Italy, chairs from France, pictures from Spain, and monsters from all parts of the world, and besides, every clime had yielded her flowers.—*Spendthrift.*

Twelve o'clock had just rung out in fair Vienna, and the sun partially gilded one of the most exquisite apartments in the old imperial city.

This was the private boudoir, of the Count Palfi, one of the magnates of Hungary, who drawing immense revenues from his paternal estates, seldom if ever quitted Vienna, except on a brief visit to Paris, where he was celebrated for his princely munificence, and lavish expenditure. Report also whispered that the Count was as well known in the worst parts of the French metropolis, as in the aristocratic saloons of the Faubourg St. Germain, and the Chaussee d' Antin, in Vienna; he was universally admired by the young ladies, who reserved their choicest smiles for the handsome profligate; the virtuous dowagers shuddered, averted their heads and returned the Count's bows with the most chilling courtesy. The men secretly envied him, circulated the most scathing sarcasms against him, but always in his absence. His beard was daily crowded, and the wits and philosophers of the day, did not refuse tasting his rich Hungarian wines, and listening to the music, of the most famous composers. One person alone either avoided him, or when thrown in his company, treated him with a cold politeness which was extremely galling, and which yet did not allow him to complain; this was an obscure German artist, Rudolph Kleinfeldt, who was fast rising into notice, and whose studio was the resort of all Vienna, as he excelled in portraits, and did not neglect other branches of the art.

The room in question, was in the west wing of the old palace of the Palfi family, in what was then the most aristocratic part of Vienna. The ceiling was lofty and carved in fantastic shapes, by an artist of no mean skill. A superb Italian marble mantle represented the grotto of Calypso, and her attendant nymphs; the halls were painted a pale peach color and thickly hung with specimens of the Italian school, mingled with some master-pieces, from the pencils of Velasquez and Murillo. Pale curtains of rose-colored damask, veiled the windows. Huge Fauteuils, in the French taste then prevalent, stood here and there; orange trees in full blossom loaded with fruit, in rich gold and white china tubs, diffused an almost oppressive fragrance. Jars of the rarest Nankin porcelain, were on each side of the mantle. Misshapen monsters, (then imported by the Dutch from Japan) frowned hideously; a red and yellow macaw uttered the most discordant screams, and a tiny lap dog of the purest Pomeranian breed reposing lazily on a cushion from time to time glanced at the door, the tables of lapis lazuli and ebony, were laden with a variety of costly trifles, a plumed hat with a diamond buckle, a snuff box and sword, on a small stand, showed that the master was not far distant.

A light footstep aroused the sagacious little animal, the door opened, and a young man entered, "framed in the very prodigality of nature." Count Palfi was now about twenty-eight, and had already been cursed with every granted craver, his face was faultless;

his complexion blonde, delicately fair, and yet not effeminate, the hands and feet were aristocratically small; master of all this splendor, and with an overflowing exchequer, Palfi was not happy; he paced the apartment with hurried steps, and at last touched a bell, a middle aged man, clad in dark velvet, answered the summons.

"Any one been here, Karl?"

"No one, my lord."

"Any letters or notes?"

"I will go below and see. Will your lordship breakfast now?"

"Yes."

Karl disappeared and soon returned with a basket which he handed to his master.

"A letter from the old Countess Mardhoff," soliloquized the Count, "Let me see what it is her ladyship is pleased to want; compliments, would feel exceedingly obliged if I could obtain for her worthless nephew, a commission in the Uhlan corps. She over estimates my influence, and yet I must do what I can. Well, I suppose it must be done. (Voices in earnest altercation in the entry, diverted the Count's attention.) Go, Karl, said he, and see, who it is. The valet quitted the room, and soon returned."

The young Count Mardhoff solicits the honor of a personal interview with your lordship, the porter did not know, whether you would receive him or not.

"Certainly, show him up."

Mardhoff entered, the last comer differed widely in his appearance from his host. The former was all Saxon, the latter, though equally high born, had rather a Southern air and manner. Unlike Palfi, he was poor, and courted the wealthy Hungarian for the sake of the many luxuries at his command; war, high play, and boundless extravagance had reduced this once lordly race to a bare pittance. His mother held a subordinate post at the palace, and his sister was in a convent.

"Welcome, Mardhoff, you are just in time," was the Count's exclamation. "You will do me the honor of breakfasting with me."

"Willingly."

"Karl, tell old Gertrude to send up what she has; but stay, before you go, bring down my crimson velvet jacket and diamond-hilted sword. If you have no objection, Mardhoff, after we have finished, we will take a drive on the St. Stephen's Platz, and see some of these beauties by daylight, whom we beheld last night at the palace." The damask dressing gown was exchanged for the national Hungarian costume, and thus habited, the Count was a superb specimen of his age and country. *Two footmen in rich liveries of green and* gold. brought in cutlets and fruit, flanked by immense loaves of brown bread, the rarest Tokay and Johanisberg glittered like gems, and were quaffed in large silver goblets, richly emblazoned with the armorial bearings of Palfi. The parrot fluttered from his perch, and stationed himself on the back of the Count's chair, begging for fruit and nuts. The dog leaped up and down, testifying by a variety of caresses his joy at his master's presence. The meal proceeded in silence, which was broken by Palfi suddenly exclaiming:

"When were you last at the studio,"

"Yesterday."

"What had he in hand then to astonish the good folks of Vienna,"

"Oh some two or three portraits, but all that I saw there, was driven out of my head by the hideous Black Crook."

"The Black Crook; what do you mean?"

"I saw an old fellow hobbling down the street, who strongly resembled Lucifer, supporting himself on a crutched cane, with a singular head, he looked up, and I shall never forget his glance of mingled curiosity, avarice and diabolical cruelty."

"Who is he? You have strangely aroused my curiosity! Where does he live? What is his name?"

I cannot tell you any more, I was not going the same way,"

"How was he dressed?"

"In a shabby suit of black velvet. One thing, however, attracted my attention: a magnificent diamond glittered on his forefinger. Well, I suppose that I shall meet him, in the meanwhile. I must look at my basket, and see with what else, fortune has provided me."

"Ah, here is an invitation for a ball at the Venetian embassy; this I shall be sure to accept. La Contessa Contarini, has always a bevy of the fairest damsels, that Austria, Hungary and Bohemia can produce."

"Yes, and the Baroness Von Opalinsky, is her dearest friend; you blush Count; there is the main attraction."

Palfi did not answer immediately; his attention was engrossed by a note, which he read and re-read, his face was flushed and his eyes sparkled with anger.

These emotions had not been unnoticed by his companion, but Mardhoff well knew that Palfi would not submit to any impertinent questions, and quietly waited till the temporary anger should subside. His expectations were soon rewarded, the Count handed him a letter, with the remark:

"What do you think of this." The epistle ran thus:

"My Lord: I know not what to think of the note I had the honor of receiving from you, accompanied by a group of lascivious statuary, with a request that I would transfer it to canvas. You have mistaken my vocation. I am a painter, it is true, and dependant upon my talents for my daily bread, but at the same time I am free to bestow those poor gifts, where and when I please.

"The province of art is to instruct, revive the taste, and improve the morals, not pander to the vilest appetites, which we have in common with the brutes.

"I therefore decline, with all due submission to your better judgment, the task you have assigned me, and refuse to prostitute my talents (if, indeed, I possess any,) to so vile a purpose.

"Very sincerely,
"Your obd't servant,
"RODOLPH KLEINFELDT."

"I cannot say but that he has answered you civilly, Count Palfi, but what did you ask him to do?"

"I saw a very fine group at the Venetian Embassy, in the Secretary's chamber, and sent it to this painter, with a request to copy it, and name his own price. He refused, impertinent beast, as if such creatures did not exist by our bounty, and are not bound to execute all our commands, without any hesitation."

"Your lordship forgets one thing," said Mardhoff, secretly enjoying Palfi's discomfiture, "that we cannot create talent."

"No, but we can pay for it."

"True, but not create it. You may, perhaps, remember what the impetuous Henry the Eighth of England said to some of his courtiers who complained of the insolence of Hans Holbein, 'of seven ploughmen I can make sev. lords, but not one Hans Holbein.' He is one of nature's noblemen, and you cannot buy him."

"Well, be it so; you will do me the honor of driving with me."

The necessary orders were issued, and a heavy lumbering coach, painted with some taste, and drawn by four Flanders' mares, speedily received the two noblemen. A drive round the public square, a chat with some of their acquaintances, and a supper attended by all the wits of Vienna, consumed the time till midnight. When Palfi was at last alone, the artist's refusal stung him to the quick. He of all "Vienna, Prague, and Pest, refused him homage, and yet he reasoned he is but a painter, who earns his gold by his pencil, *while I have scores of* acres and thousands in bright gold, and yet he denies me the use of his talents, quietly sets me at naught, and as quietly returns my cold bows, with an equally frigid salutation; the devil take such fellows; and the Count addressed himself to his slumbers.

CHAPTER II.

AN ARTIST'S STUDIO.

"My friend insisted on taking me to see an artist, who, he said, was a particular friend, and I had no choice; so we sat out, climbed three steep stair-cases, and at last got in. The room was large, and perfectly crammed with busts, hands and feet; here were crayon drawings, there a half finished picture on an easel; heaps of armour, old costumes, daggers, and Turkish slippers, with a variety of other articles, as the auctioneer would say, too tedious to mention, were piled up, in a not unpleasing confusion, in one corner of the room."—*Tour in Italy.*

The studio of Rodolph Kleinfeldt, was frequented by all in Vienna, who were, or who wished to be, thought patrons of art; situated in rather a retired part of the old city, the rooms were at least light and ventilated. Sketches from some of the most famous Italian palaces and galleries, hung on the walls; a table was covered with casts of hands and feet; a Venus modeled after the famous statue of Crete, stood in one corner. Arms, daggers, and an embroidered cafton, were heaped in a kind of picturesque disorder; in another, old chairs richly carved, were arranged for the accommodation of visitors; a half-finished picture was on the easel, and the artist stood at some distance, earnestly contemplating his work.

Rodolph Kleinfeldt had reached his thirtieth year; he could not boast of high descent, or noble blood, but nature had endowed him with rare talents; his father was an obscure mechanic in Vienna, and strictly attached to his religion he frequently took Rodolph to church, and the boy by gazing on the pictures, and other works of art, gradually imbibed a love of painting, and one day astonished his father with a rude copy of an old virgin and child, which had long been the sole ornament of his modest home; a nobleman hearing of this prodigy in humble life, extended a helping hand, and was not disappointed in his protege. A year in the great metropolis of the world completed his studies, and trusting to his genius, the artist boldly returned to his native

city, with a stout heart, and a firm resolution to carve out his way to fortune.

He had not forgotten his beneficent friend, and presented him with a small but exquisitely finished copy of an old picture he had seen at Rome, which particularly struck his fancy.

This did not escape notice; his generous benefactor hung the work of his young friend in a prominent position, and did not fail to descant upon its merits. His benevolent design succeeded: commissions flowed in, and at the end of five years Rodolph Kleinfeldt was reputed the most talented artist in the city.

His appearance was exceedingly attractive; every movement betokened vivacity and intellect; devoted to his art, his whole world was comprised in his studio: the picture slowly progressed, but each day added to its beauties. While thus occupied, an aged nobleman entered the studio and cautiously inquired if he had the pleasure of addressing the celebrated artist Rudolph Kleinfeldt.

"My name is Kleinfeldt," is the reply, "but I cannot say that I am a celebrated artist."

"You are too modest; fame has assigned you a high place in your profession. I lately purchased a picture of a Spanish gentleman, whose necessities compelled him to part with it, but only on the condition that I would have a copy made, which should be his."

Kleinfeldt bowed; and the picture, representing a man about forty-five, in a semi-military costume, was brought in the studio. The face was rather interesting, and had an indescribable expression. The painter looked attentively at the canvas and seemed at a loss.

"What is the matter?" asked his companion.

"I am confused," was the reply. "This seems to be a man's picture, and yet the expression is exceedingly feminine."

"You are both right and wrong, the picture is of a woman, who played a man's part. If you have no objection, I shall tell her story in a few words. It is the portrait of Dona Catalina de Erauso, the nun ensign, who, quitted her convent to go in the army, sailed for the Americas, landed safely, encountered a variety of adventures, crossed the Great Desert, entered a convent, returned to Spain, and obtained a pension."

"What became of her at last."

"Her end is not known, but I trust that you will not disappoint me, and exert your utmost abilities. The picture is rare, and if well done, will enhance your reputation."

"A person wishes to see you sir, said an elderly woman, who officiated as janitress."

"Show him up."

The woman hesitated.

"What is it Marguerite."

"Well, sir, if you will take the advice of an old woman, who has seen more of the world than you, and who wishes you well, do not see that man, or rather that demon."

"What do you mean?"

"Tell that man."

"I say old woman, are you going to keep me here all day. I can tell you that I am not accustomed to be kept all day in the cold," croaked out a harsh voice.

"There he is, I must go; but oh! master, dear, if you mind what I say, do not let that man come up."

"Nonsense, Marguerite I fear nothing on earth or,——

Again the voice exclaimed, "Am I to come up or not?"

The terrified janitress ran rapidly down stairs, the sound of a crutch or stick was heard, the door thrown open, and an individual entered.

Kleinfeldt and his visitor involuntarily gazed upon the new arrival.

This was a man who had evidently passed his sixtieth year, and presented a striking contrast to the former inmates of the room. Kleinfeldt was still in the bloom of youth, the nobleman, though youth had long since flown, retained a very pleasant expression, and was attired with the most scrupulous neatness; the new arrival, in addition to his years, had a spiteful and malignant countenance, his thin lips when opened, disclosed toothless gums. He was exceedingly bent, and a large hump had the effect of detracting from his height. Time had not dimmed the lustre of his eyes, which shone with a serpentine brilliancy. His hands resembled withered bird's claws; a suit of shabby black velvet, well worn, a felt hat, and a pair of boots of Spanish leather, so patched, that it was hard to discover the original material, completed his attire; leaning on a black stick, with a head in the shape of a crook, he thus addressed the astonished painter:

"Well, I had great work to get up! I advise you to tell your housekeeper to be more civil to those who call; people who have their living to get should be more polite to visitors."

"I was only aware that you had called, and gave orders that you should be admitted as speedily as possible."

"Well, it may be so," rejoined he of the Black Crook, with an evil glare.

"May I ask," replied Kleinfeldt, blandly, "how I can serve you?"

"I should not have come if I had not needed your services. I never visit persons for mere civility—I want a picture."

"On what subject—original or a copy?"

"This will be an original."

"What kind of a picture do you want?"

"I shall want a Venus coming from the sea. I have a particular use for it. What will be your price?"

"I cannot do the work for less than five hundred ducats."

"Well, I cannot give the half of that. I will give two hundred and fifty."

"I am not accustomed to abate my price. I cannot do the work for less. Ah, Prince Pal—r, I hope that I have the pleasure of seeing you in perfect health."

"I am as well as usual," was the haughty reply, with a manner calculated to prevent any further conversation.

"I remember well when I first had the honor of meeting you."

"I will not trouble you to detail any further recollections," was the chilling answer.

"Well, people change so."

The prince, making a low bow to the artist, said, "another time I will do myself the honor of calling on you, till then, *au revoir*," and he departed without noticing the Black Crook.

"Pride must have a fall," was the bitter rejoinder, rather to himself than to Kleinfeldt, casting a bitter glance after the departing figure.

"Now, sir artist, shall we resume our agreement? Could you not do that picture for me, for say, three hundred ducats?"

"I have already told you that I never higgle, and that I shall not abate my price. I must have five hundred ducats—I will not touch that picture unless I receive that price."

"Well, I suppose that I must give what you ask," replied Black Crook, with a baleful gaze, "but I think that it will be the worse for you."

"You are at liberty to do as you please, and I claim the same freedom, perhaps, remember hat, perhaps you will refuse; but in order to prevent that, I shall pay you at once one hundred golden ducats."

As he spoke, the old man putting his hands in his pocket, drew out a heavily laden purse, from which he extracted a mass of coin, and counting down one hundred ducats said, "I have bound the bargain. You cannot now refuse me. In three weeks I shall come and see what progress you have made. Now I shall go.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, ere he trotted nimbly down stairs, banged the door after him and vanished.

Kleinfeldt standing by the table, mechanically handled the gold, and was reckoning it, when old Marguerite burst into the room, trembling in every limb, and fear painted in every lineament.

"Oh, master dear, has that devil's imp gone?"

"Do you mean the man with the black crook? If it will give you any satisfaction, he has gone." He did not add, "to my great satisfaction," though he felt immensely relieved, when he was once more alone, he did not wish Margueritte to see that he was afraid.

The gold on the table caught the old gourmante's eyes, who at once exclaimed:

"What a heap of money! Did that old villian bring it here?"

"Marguerite, you must not talk so of my visitors, but since you are so inquisitive, I will satisfy you. He did give it me."

"Oh, master dear, I beg and conjure you, not to touch that devil's trash."

"Devil's trash!"

"Yes, that man is an imp of Satan, as sure as can be. You know him, don't you?"

"I cannot say that I do."

"He is a magician."

"A magician!"

"Yes, I know a woman, who lives near him, and no matter at what hour of the night she rises, there's that old fiend at his work; the windows are never open; day or night, it is all the same. And then what volumes of smoke pour out from his chimney."

"Pooh, Marguerite, only a little cooking."

"A little cooking! No master, yellow sulphurous smoke in vast volumes, with an awful smell, and then he has such dreadful women coming to see him, such old hags. And when they are there, the door is shut, and no one then is admitted."

"Who takes care of his house?" "A half starved man, and a deformed dumb negro, who like his master, is hump-backed; and then country women go to him for elixir and perfumes. Oh master, take my advice, and send back that gold, it will never do you any good."

"I shall keep it and run the risk."

"Good bye, master; but if you take my advice you'll not keep that gold."

The old woman's conversation was not without its effect; the artist remembered also, that the prince, though polite to the Black Crook, as he mentally termed his visitor, still avoided looking at him, and ended the interviews as soon as politeness to him would permit, slightly tinctured with the superstition of the age, which still believed in witchcraft, spells, and incantations, he made the sign of the cross, and involuntarily looking at a head of Christ, modeled after Michael Angelo, muttered a fervent prayer, and addressed himself again to his task; but he had lost his spirits, and could not work with his accustomed

power, the brush fell from his hand, and his eyes refused any longer to recognize colors.

Can it be, he exclaimed, that Marguerite is is right, and that the old man has cast a spell upon me, the wisest say, that such things are possible, if he have, I shall never prosper again.

Night drew rapidly on, and the artist, locking his chamber, took a solitary stroll throughout the city; the weather was charming, and the moon bathed St. Stephen's in a flood of silvery light. Kleinfeldt directed his steps to the cathedral, hallowed by the consecration of so many sovereigns of the house of Hapsburg; the whole city was wrapped in repose, and Kleinfeldt climbing one of the butresses, cast a glance at the interior of that consecrated fane. A solitary light was burning at a side altar, and the wind murmered softly at a little distance through the trees; soothed by the tranquillity of the scene, Kleinfeldt sauntered slowly away, and regained his chamber, where he sat by the casement, musing on the events of the day; and morning broke, ere he sought his couch, where he was soon wrapped in a profound slumber.

Ten o'clock found the artist at his task, refreshed by his repose; a modest tap at the door, was answered by an invitation to enter, and a little girl about ten years of age, with a flower basket stood before him; who modestly tendering a bouquet, said, "wont you have some roses and violets?"

"With all pleasure, my little maid, but what shall I give you?"

"Oh sir, I cannot take anything from you."

"But why should you bestow your flowers on me?"

My name is Theresa von Hummel, perhaps you know my father."

Kleinfeldt recollected that some five or six months before, he had rendered some trifling service to the organist of the cathedral, and smilingly said, "well Theresa, if you will have it so, I will accept what you have so kindly offered; but you must allow me to do something in return for you."

The flower girl gazed timidly around, and her eye rested on a small engraving of Raphael's Madonna and Child, on the table—and at last hesitatingly said: "that is very pretty."

"Well it is yours."

Theresa courtesied gratefully, and withdrew.

This little incident diverted the artist. He seemed to breathe more freely, and the brush was taken up with fresh vigor, the colors seemed brighter than usual, and he remarked to himself, "I feel as well as if I were in *Italy wandering through St. Peter's*, and contemplating the frescoes of Michael Angelo," he had lost for the moment, all thoughts of the Black Crook, and was once more jolly and light hearted.

CHAPTER III.

BLACK CROOK AND HIS DEN.

I TELL your grace, that yon fellow is dangerous.

Duchess. What do you mean?

Isabella. That he is not to be trusted. That he is a brigand, fortune-teller and alchemist all in one.

Duchess, Have you ever been to visit him?

Isabella. Once. I went with the old Baroness Krusenstein.

Duchess. Well, what did you see?

Isabella. I cold not tell your grace, one half of the horrors that met my eyes. Skulls grinned at me fearfully. Arms without hands, and hands without arms, skulls, and all sorts of magical apparatus. I thought I was not safe till I got out into the fresh air, and prayed that I might never be inveigled into such a place again.—*Aldermit.*

Wolfgang Hertzog, or as he was better known as Black Crook, resided in what had once been the most fashionable quarter of Vienna, in a large and spacious mansion which, some three or four centuries before, had been the abode of Matthias Corvintos, a famous empiric, in the service of Andrew of Hungary, and, tradition averred, that he was in the habit of casting sundry weird spells there; and the populace of that century seldom named the house without making the sign of the cross and muttering a Pater Noster; and untold gold could hardly have induced any one to have crossed the threshhold after nightfall. This reputation clung to the property, which passed into the possession of Prince Paul Esterhazy, and for nearly fifty years the steward of his estate, though he offered the mansion at a most reasonable rate, could not find a tenant. One evening, about midnight, after the household of Esterhazy had retired, it was aroused by a furious knock at the front door, and, protruding his head from the window, the valet asked who the visitor was and what he wanted at such an unseasonable hour.

"Who I am it is of no consequence for you to know, my business is with your master, not you; I never deal with underlings—admit me."

"The prince is not in the palace, he has gone to a masquerade and his return is uncer-

tain—you must call in the morning;" with these words the window was closed, and the stranger compelled to depart.

The next morning, as early as politeness would permit, the night visitor presented himself and was ushered into the prince's presence, who at once asked him his business.

"I understand that your highness has an empty house to rent, and, if you have no objection, I should like to be your tenant."

"You are right; I have an unemployed house, but may I ask—"

"You said," replied the stranger, "that the house was vacant, I want it; what is the price?"

The prince was startled; here was an offer for a house which had been unoccupied for twenty years, and yet he did not like the appearance or manner of his interlocutor. The stranger was richly, though gravely clad, his features were handsome, his manner bespoke acquaintance with the highest rank, his deportment, though courteous, checked all curiosity, and the pair sat in silence for a few moments.

"Well, may I ask if your highness has yet come to any determination?"

"It is usual," replied the prince, coldly, "when persons come to give their names, residence, fortune, and former occupation, but such is not my custom. I can pay, and that, I think, will waive the necessity of answering any further questions. Once more, I ask your highness can I have the house?"

The prince was surprised, and after a moment's consideration replied:

"Perhaps you will permit me to consult my steward; I hear him in the next room; or perchance you will admit him to our conference?"

"By no means, as I have already informed the valet I rarely deal with inferiors; but since your highness wishes to speak with him I will await your leisure."

Esterhazy, who was glad of an opportunity to leave his visitor, and who did not wish to lose the chance of renting the house, retired, and, after a short interval, returned. The steward and his lord had agreed that, should the stranger consent to the terms demanded, the property should be his.

"I have come to the conclusion, sir," said the prince, returning to the apartment, and making a slight inclination of the head, "that the property shall be yours at the rent of a thousand ducats, yearly."

"I accept your terms; and, to avoid any further trouble, shall pay the sum at once," and, drawing out a heavy pocket book, the stranger *deposited notes on the Bank of Vienna, to the full amount*, on the table.

"It is not necessary," said the incognito, "that you should know who I am, here is your cash; may I trouble you with a receipt, which will close our interview?"

The prince was startled, and mechanically complied with the incognito's request, who, haughtily bowing, withdrew.

The citizens in the vicinity of the Old Mansion, or, as it was commonly called, the Magician's Den, were astonished to see the windows open, and preparations made, as if it were about to be occupied by a family. Some more adventurous than their neighbors ventured to enter the dusty halls and sombre chambers, which had not been opened for more than twenty years, and dame Trudchen, the most inveterate gossip in the neighborhood, meeting the old man in charge of the house, inquired:

"So you have come to take the old house?"

"You might have judged as much, when you see what I am doing."

"Yes, yes, that is very plain; and I hope that you and I shall be good neighbors."

"We shall see that hereafter."

"How long, do you think, that you will remain?"

"Well, dame, all things are uncertain."

"So my good man was accustomed to say. He expected to make a fortune, and that I should ride in my carriage as fine as any lady in the land, but, Lord bless you, sir, his anticipations all came to nothing; one night the good man went out to drink a little wine with one of his friends, his foot slipped, and he left me a poor lone widow. Are you a German, sir?"

"Do I not speak the same language as yourself?"

"From what part of Germany do you come?"

"I have lived in all parts."

"What is your master's name?"

"Why do you wish to know?"

"You know that it is but natural when folks move in a house, that we like to know who they are."

Somewhat abashed by the servant's manner, Trudchen affected to be attentively examining the carving of the mantlepiece, but again shortly resumed her questions.

"Do you reside in Vienna?"

"I think I told you just now that I have lived in all parts of Germany."

"So you did, and I was very stupid not to recollect, but my head is so full of other matters that sometimes I forget."

"Yes, of your neighbors' business," said the steward, *sotto voce*.

"What were you pleased to say, sir?"

"I was engrossed with my own thoughts."

"Well, sir, but really you have not told me your name yet."

"Oh, you can give me any name you choose, Peter, John, Paul, or I don't much care what."

"Oh, it is a matter of no consequence; I dare say that we shall get along very well together, but how about your master?"

"Like the rest of mankind, he eats when he is hungry, drinks when thirsty, and goes to bed when sleepy."

"So I suppose; but you have not yet told me his name, rank, or fortune."

"As to his name, you may give him any title you please; make him commander-in-chief of the forces, grant him a salary, and I may venture to assert that he won't complain; or create him a prince, baron, or count, and if you give him money enough he will be satisfied."

"All that is very true, but from what part does your master come?"

"My master, oh! he has lived in all the kingdoms of Europe. Sometimes he passes the winter in Italy, the summer in the Alps, and the next winter in Paris; he hates to be asked questions, is accountable to no one, and I think that he is right; one is not obliged to answer every question."

"Yes, there you are right, but as you have not answered my question, perhaps you will be so kind as to inform me, whether he is married or single?"

"Well dame he did not tell me, whether he was married and to say the truth, I did not see the marriage ceremony performed so that I cannot with any certainty inform you, whether he is married or single, perhaps you had better ask him yourself."

"I! oh no, I, as you may plainly see, never meddle in my neighbor's business. So good morning to you."

"Farewell, madam," and Trudchen, without further ado, made her exit.

"At last," exclaimed the old steward, "I am rid of that chattering plague, I would rather face a battery than undergo a series of questions from a woman who is determined to meddle in her neighbors' concerns."

Trudchen also went her way with the firm determination that, happen what might, she would keep a sharp lookout on the mansion in question. Ten days elapsed, and the old woman's curiosity was still unsatisfied; but, inhabiting a wretched hovel opposite, she stationed herself at the window day and night; her curiosity was finally rewarded (as after her interview with the old servant the doors were barred) by seeing a carriage heavily laden with trunks drive up after midnight in the twinkling of an eye. Trudchen was on the same side of the street.

A gentleman, closely masked, leaped out of the vehicle, and assisted a veiled female to alight. The old servant, her former acquaintance, took off some trunks and packages. The house door was carefully locked, after the travellers had entered. The next morning Trudchen, attired in her best, knocked and tendered her services.

"As I know who you are, and where to find you," said the old servant, who opened the door, "should we need your services, I will send for you."

"But the lady—"

The old servant started and changed color, Trudchen, emboldened by his hesitation, went on,—"But the lady may perhaps want one of her own sex."

"Should I require you, as I said before, I know where to find you. I must now bid you adieu."

Trudchen discomfitted was forced to return home as wise as she went, but in fact there was a mystery about the house, which gradually extended to all in the neighborhood. No one ever visited there; the old man alone went to market to make the slender purchases necessary for the little household, carefully locking the door after him; the shutters were never opened, and the veiled lady was never seen, neither the priest nor doctor ever darkened the doors. The lord of the mansion occasionally strode out at midnight and returned at the little hours, admitting himself by a key. Three months thus passed, when it was observed that the old servant no longer was seen in the market, and that his master never quitted the mansion. These facts were communicated to the police by the watchful Trudchen, and the chief of that body at length determined to pay a visit to the fearful domicil, selecting a bright May morning.

Accompanied by one of his trusty officers, and stationing two others on the steps of a neighboring church, should their services be required, the chief repairing to the house, knocked long and loud, but received no answer. He called, but met the same fate. His course was now plain. He sent for a blacksmith, and directed him, in the name of the law, to open the door. His orders were promptly executed, and the four officials, accompanied by Trudchen, entered the spacious apartments. No one was there, nor was any living creature to be seen; all was in the nicest order. In silence the party ascended the staircase, and the chief threw open the door of the largest chamber on the second floor, drew back in horror, and was

two accomplished speechless. Motioning to his companions, they all entered the room. The body of a young veiled female was extended on the bed. The chief slowly removed the covering, and showed features beautiful even in decay. Summoning a physician, he ascertained by his examination, that the unfortunate woman had been dead more than a week. Two costly diamonds glittered on her hands, and a miniature of a handsome cavalier was clasped to her breast, as if clutched in the death agony. The drawers in the different articles of furniture were opened; a single scrap of paper revealed the cause of the unhappy woman's death.

"She was my wife, she was unfaithful, I killed her."

Large rewards were offered, but no trace could ever be found of the murderer and his accomplice. The unhappy beauty was quietly interred in a distant cemetery belonging to a suppressed convent of Franciscans, and the jewels found on her person, sold for the benefit of a charitable institution.

Again was the house empty, no one would buy it, no one would live in it; Trudchen asserted that the spirit of the murdered lady walked in the garden, though her fellow gossips never could understand, how she could see it, as the garden was surrounded with immensely high walls, and she lived opposite the front.

More than half a century elapsed, the prince his steward, and old Trudchen had long since been gathered to their fathers; still the house remained untenanted. One morning the new steward was agreeably surprised, by receiving an application for its occupancy, in writing, dated from one of the most obscure hostelries of the imperial city. A civil answer in the affirmative was returned, requesting the favor of an interview. The applicant was no other than Wolfgang Hertzog; who by his invariable black stick, with its head, was better known as Black Crook, or, sometimes as that confounded old Black Crook. Hertzog was fully aware of the terrible rumors circulated about the mansion, of which he proposed becoming master, and availed himself of it to obtain a heavy reduction in the rent.

He had now been there about six months, and his household consisted of a speechless negro boy, with an enormous misshapen head, always dressed in the oriental fashion, with a turban, white full trowers, and silver armlets; a half starved lad named Grepo, who was commonly saluted as his master, with the endearing epithets of "Grepo, you wretch"—"where is *that lazy hound*—remember if you breathe a word, that you either see or hear, woe betide you, I'll send you to the land of spirits." The ill-fated boy received a monkey's allowance, more kicks than half pence; a black cat, and a raven, were the only objects for which the Black Crook had any affection; Grepo was rarely seen in the front of the house, the black receiving and dismissing all visitors; in fact he never left the vestibule, but was always within call of his master's bell.

On the morning in question, Black Crook was seated in his office or reception room, the ceiling had been originally painted in fresco, but time and moisture had dimmed the lustre of the original tints, though occasionally, a head of some power might be discerned; the floor was a miracle of art, and composed of a number of small pieces fitted into each other, with marvellous nicety; a square table with claw feet stood in the centre of the room covered with a red cloth, embroidered with Egyptian hieroglyphics; three or four arm chairs stood about; the adept himself had exchanged his doublet, for a worn wrapper of velvet, faced with the skin of the Astrakan lamb, and a cap of the same material rested on his forehead; his raven on a perch close at hand, from time to time, uttered mournful cries; and the black cat was snugly nestled on a cushion at his feet. Black Crook was then busily occupied in the perusal of a volume on magic, and occasionally took notes to test the writer; he pondered long on a certain receipt, and at last said: "I will try this;" ringing the bell, he desired the speechless black to inform Grepo, that his presence was desirable.

Answering, Grepo did not hesitate in answering the summons, as he knew the consequences of his disobedience, and soon was standing before his dreaded master.

"Well, you thief, here you are. I shall need your services. Go out, make a fire in the laboratory, then put on your hat and fly on the wings of the wind, and inform Mistress Flechner that I would speak with her to night at eight o'clock, and that she must bring some of her gossips with her—vanish and execute my bidding."

The messenger dispatched, Black Crook again resumed his occult studies, and was deep in the calculation of a horoscope, when the black entered, and, after making an Eastern saalam, remained standing with folded arms.

"Some one to see me?"

The dwarf nodded assent.

"Male or female?"

The dwarf held up three fingers, to signify the latter.

"Young or old?"

The little finger of the right hand was held up to signify that she was young and beautiful.

"Show her in."

Another low salaam and the dwarf vanished, but soon returned, accompanied by a female figure clad in black, whose face was masked. The negro, having accomplished his mission, passed into the vestibule.

"I believe," said the visitress, "you are the celebrated Dr. Hertzog?"

"My name is Wolfgang Hertzog, but whether I am known to fame or not is not for me to say; but what would you with me?"

"Report says that you are skilled in the secret sciences."

"I have made some researches in the learning of the East, and passed a long life in the prosecution of science. Nature when duly interrogated will surrender many secrets to her patient inquirers."

"Can you control the affections of the absent?"

"Science overcomes all obstacles."

"I am rich, I can pay heavily."

"Lady, you love one who does not reciprocate your passion?"

"Even so, and I would fain procure some charm or philter to win back his truant love."

"That is possible, Arabia and the spicy coast pour out their treasures."

"I pray of you let me have one. I will give you gold and gems, nay more; win me back he heart that I fear is lost, and you may name your own price, and, as an earnest, here are seventy ducats in gold, and, if you are successful, I will treble the amount."

The adept's eyes glittered with avarice. Gold was the idol of his soul, not for use or enjoyment, but simply the consciousness of possession, and as he carefully counted the coins he replied:

"My poor services are at your command. I will compound a rare and precious elixir which I will stake my existence will make him faithful to you, and only you, but it is necessary that I should cast your horoscope, and know when the conjunction of planets will be favorable. Lady, you must unmask."

"Perhaps it will not be necessary for me to show my features."

"I tell you that it is absolutely necessary, or I should not have made the demand."

"I suppose, then, that I must yield," and without further delay, she rose, and, detaching her mask and throwing off her cloak, showed a form of the most classic grace and exquisitely chiselled features. There was one peculiarity *in her beauty rarely seen in these* Northern climes: her skin was of a marble whiteness and her hair dark as the raven's wing. Long did the adept gaze and look, as if old memories rushed across his brain. At last he demanded in a voice broken with emotion:

"You are not an Austrian by birth?"

"No, I have a Northern father, but my mother—"

"Was a Spaniard?"

"No, a Greek."

"Strange," muttered the Black Crook, more to himself than his companion, "the resemblance is so strong—eyes, hair, voice. Were you ever in Spain, lady?"

"Never."

"I am, then, mistaken. Let us proceed; give me the day and hour of your birth."

Both were named.

"Now have the kindness to seat yourself, and betray no astonishment at any thing that you may see or hear, it is a method familiarized to me, and from which you have nothing to fear."

The lady bowed assent, and the empiric, throwing back the doors of a closet, disclosed a skeleton mounted in the best style then known. Hastily casting aside the cap and wrapper, he quickly put on a species of purple caftan of the richest Genoa velvet profusely embroidered with the signs of the zodiac; a massive silver staff, with a golden head, was firmly grasped, a curious mitre-shaped cap was placed on his brow, and his wrists were clasped with bracelets of gems imitating serpents, a solitary diamond of the purest water and of great value glittered on his forefinger. Summoning the black, he issued some order in a foreign tongue, and busied himself in the erection of an altar of the most hideous and grotesque description. The base was formed of human skulls, and the table of arms and legs alternately. The black now reappeared, bending under the weight of immense silver candlesticks, representing the three Fates, each holding a taper of black wax. The skeleton was then placed behind the altar and the fearful rites commenced. Leaning on his staff, the magician slowly repeated a dirge:

"Spirits of earth and air,
Thy aid we do invite;
Come do my will."

Casting his eye rapidly over the altar, he seemed as if in search of something, and at last examined the chalice. "Where is it?" He soon found it, and mixing some wine and water poured it over the altar, saying in a loud clear tone, "This do I offer to the spirits of evil." Drawing two packets of drugs from his bosom, he took small quantities of each,

and placing them on a silver plate ignited the mass, and the apartment was soon filled with clouds of the most fragrant vapor. As it gradually cleared away, he exclaimed the charm works. "The spirits are propitious; I will now cast your nativity."

Still clad in his official costume, the magician approached the table, and drawing forth a sheet of parchment, soon covered it with mystic characters; thought for a moment, and then said: "Lady, the stars are favorable, the Fates smile; whatever you undertake will succeed. I will prepare the elixir at another time. Farewell."

"When shall I return?"

"Let me see, seven is a mystic number; return in a fortnight. Twice seven,—see the tapers burn brightly. Once more, farewell."

Donning her mask, the incognito was escorted to the door with all the ceremonious courtesy of the old school by the Black Crook in person, who, at parting, made her a stately and ceremonious bow, which would not have disgraced the splendid Louis of France, so noted for his devotion to the other sex.

He then returned to his study, reassumed his old wrapper and headgear, and vainly endeavored to bury himself in his studies; but the recollections of the past were too powerful.

"Where have I seen that face? can the grave surrender its dead? Yes, is it you, or your very image and likeness? Who is it? who can it be? The hands, eyes, and complexion are so similar. Let me roll back forty years. No, it is impossible, I was then young, gay, bright, now old, withered, and decrepid, a jest and mockery. As if these limbs could ever have been straight, as if I once had a heart, as if I once thought there was faith in man, and honor in woman. These are dreams of the past, let but success attend my efforts, and possessed of that, which all men secretly worship, I yet can rule at least a portion of mankind."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RECEPTION ROOM OF A LADY OF HIGH RANK IN VIENNA, TWO CENTURIES AGO.

"These women are showy and capricious creatures. Sometimes they love a man to distraction, who does not care a whit for them; and dispise the one who fondles on them like a lapdog."—*Ben Jonson.*

Carriage after carriage had driven up to the palace of Prince Lobkowitz, who stood high in the confidence of his sovereign. For *many years he had been* a widower, and his daughter presided over his household, where, every Thursday, she received the elite of the Vienna nobility; for be it known, gentle reader, that the possession of a title is not, of itself, a sufficient passport to the highest Austrian circles. No man is haughtier than the Austrian who can count his sixteen quarterings. Unlike his English brethren, he is not wise enough to purify his blood and regild his coronet by a marriage with a plebian heiress, no, he must marry his equal, or be a forced celibate.

The very cream of the ancient capital of the modern Cæsars was assembled in the saloons of the palace, and none shone more conspicuously than the young princess, whose acquaintance we have already made at the mansion of the Black Crook. Clad in pink satin and glittering with diamonds, she was beyond all comparison the handsomest person in the room, and yet a keen observer might have discovered bitter and vindictive hate, if that passion was aroused, the direst jealousy, and utter and unscrupulous disregard of the rights of others, so that she could compass her own ends, but all these were hidden with smiles; if there were an abyss, it was covered with flowers.

The usual nothings passed, the customary bon mots were uttered, persons were enchanted to behold their friends and were exceedingly grieved to part with them, and all the usual polite fictions which pass for truth (with this exception that no one is deceived,) were exchanged. The princess glanced uneasily around the circle, the one whom she most desired to see had not yet arrived.

Prince Paler, bowing gently, made his way through the room, and accosted his hostess:

"I had not the pleasure of seeing you on the Stephen Platz to-day, and yet you are one of the ornaments there."

"No, I was otherwise engaged. And you, prince, I suppose that if I am an ornament, you are one of the pillars of the state."

"You are pleased to flatter. No, I was at the studio of Rodolph Kleinfeldt, the young artist, as I wish him to make a copy of a picture I have just purchased, and anticipated a pleasant conversation about art and artists, when I was disagreeably interrupted by the appearance of one of Satan's emissaries."

"Who do you mean?" said the princess, coloring evidently, and striking over a vase of flowers.

"Wolfgang Hertzog, or, as he prefers being called, Doctor Hertzog."

"Who is this Dr. Hertzog?"

"I knew him well when I was Minister to the Court of Spain."

"What was his reputation there?"

"Of a man of great science, but as consummate a villain as ever went unhung; had I been on the Grand Inquisitor I should have condemned him to fire and faggot, solely for his villainous countenance, but I had more solid grounds of d'slike. He resided in the Jew's quarter of Madrid, though not a Hebrew himself, and passed his time in study and practice of magic, assisted in his diabolical incantations by an old Moor, an aged Mexican, and a young Jewess; this last was the most earned of the four. She spoke and wrote fluently all the languages of the East, had passed some time at Damascus, Jerusalem, and Grand Cairo, and from her Hertzog obtained the most famous of his receipts. She was exceedingly skillful."

"Do you know what was her most famous preparation?"

"A subtle and powerful essence, a compound of many rare and costly drugs, prepared with incantations, and sundry fearful rites; human skulls, and other fearful and unhallowed ceremonies."

"But the effect of this was true;" said the princess, with an impatience she could scarcely check, "and I will relate you one instance: there was a wealthy and beautiful heiress, the youthful duchess of Alcanaux, who passionately loved a young captain of the guards, who was silly enough not to return her passion; but preferred another, without a ducat in her purse, a drop of good blood in her veins, or a tithe of the beauty of her glorious rival. The duchess got the elixir, and at once administered it, in a glass of wine, to the captain, who from that moment quitted his first love, and eventually married the fascinating heiress, who had estates in every province, both at Castile and Leon, and an immense sum at the Jewish bankers."

"And the duchess got this preparation, which wrought such wonderful things, from Hertzog."

"Yes, the Jewess on her deathbed bequeathed this infernal quack, all her books, implements and materials."

"Are you certain of it?"

"Yes, from one circumstance; a grandee was taken seriously ill, and all the most famous leeches of the capital vainly prescribed, and after repeated trials, declared that art could do no more, and that the Marquis de Osorio, must die. Catching like a drowning man at a straw; the patient desired that Hertzog should be summoned, who was speedily introduced into his chamber."

"And the effect?"

"I will tell you, but you are exceedingly curious about matters, which might interest an Italian savant, but scarcely a German lady of rank and fashion, but I will tell you what I know: Hertzog at once said, 'your ladyship has been poisoned, and I know the proper remedy; follow my directions, and I can save you.' Sundry fomentations were applied, externally. A gentle perspiration ensued. Some medicines, which Hertzog alone would administer, in the utmost privacy, were swallowed, and in less than a month, the patient was in the enjoyment of his usual health; exultation was painted on the princess' countenance, which was still further increased by the entrance of her rival.

This was the young countess Helena Lingetski, the sole remaining scion of an ancient and wealthy Bohemian house; unlike the princess Lobkowitz, she was a brunette, the upper part of her face was good, but the lips were full and sensual, and there was a latent fire in the dark lustrous eye, that would soon kindle into flame. Her dress was calculated to set off her Oriental style of beauty. A plain cusage ending in a point, revealed her exquisite bust; the skirt was of ruby velvet, with a long train; a robe of pearls, with diamond tassels, was tied round her waist; a necklace of the same costly gems encircled her superbly moulded throat; bracelets of cameo, each head representing a sovereign, which had doubtless before graced a beauty of Pharaoh's court, clasped her round, plump and well-proportioned arms; her glossy black hair, with a purple tint, was confined by a pearl boudeau, and a white catcherntie worth a prince's ransom, was carelessly thrown over her shoulders.

I trust that I see the Princess Lobkowitz in her customary health. I need not ask if she is in her ordinary spirits, as I see by the delighted countenance of Prince Paler, that she has been as usual the charm of the circle.

"Your Ladyship is as always the wit of the company."

"I am not a man to be so flattered. By the way, princess, talking of these lords of creation, as they proudly style themselves, I do not see so many of the butterflies as common here."

"I cannot tell the reason; yet let me see, there's Amblein, an empty headed fop, who prates of his success at Paris and Florence, but who I really believe, was merely suffered; report adds, that he is only too willing to convert M'lle. Ahaharos into Madame La Baronne de Amblein, 'from *les beaux yeux de La Cassette*.'"

"You are severe, but pray continue your list."

"Then look at Tranton Aradorff; if that fel-

love really likes any one, it is Ernest Trantom Arsdorff, and at that shrine he kneels with an eastern idolatry."

"I believe you are right, but mentally adding to herself, why don't she talk about the only one, whose name has a charm for me."

"Then what do you think of Glaunach?"

"Who, that dark handsome Saxon, the Secretary of the Grand Duke's Minister?"

"The same."

"Why, to tell the truth, the fellow has so little conversation, that he only seems to know the use of monosyllables; a fine day, my lady! have you been on the Platz this morning? were you at Prince Windischgazt's ball last night, and shall you go to the redotti to-morrow? there now, you have the sum total of what he says to every woman."

"I think that I can suit you. What think you of the Duca di Sangro, the Envoy from Tuscany."

"What a question. I always thought that we Viennoise were exceedingly tenacious on the subject of quarterings, but di Sangro exceeds even the old canoness, Frustemberg, and I verily believe, that if he were on his death bed, before he would receive the last sacraments, he would ask if the priest could count sixteen quarterings."

A tall and handsome young man in the uniform of a Bohemian lancer, now joined the pair."

"I suppose that you are cutting up all the beaux, both absent and present."

"What a vain creature, as if we all troubled our heads about you," replied the Countess Lingotsky, "you are indeed well enough, at least some of you; not all, to hand one to her carriage, pick up a fan, carry a lap-dog, or whirl round in the mazourka or waltz."

"You are not just, countess."

"Pray, tell me, to what other use you can be put."

"Oh yes, you can fight."

"You will find that harder work than embroidering flags and banners."

"But where have you been all summer."

"You know that my regiment was in Bohemia."

"In what part."

"Treplitz."

At this period, both the ladies started, though each endeavored to conceal her agitation from the other, and there was a pause of some seconds."

"How do you pass your time at Treplitz?" asked the princess."

"We ride, hunt, shoot, and that confounded old Martinent Bubna, makes us drill at least twice a day."

"But that is fun."

"You would not think so, if you were obliged to turn out of bed at six in the morning, and drill again at five in the afternoon, no matter what the weather may be, to be forced to endure the winter's cold, and the summer's heat.

"No doubt, it is extremely irksome to gentlemen of your delicate constitution."

The sarcasm was lost, as the captain was on too good terms with himself to suspect that the speaker was turning him into ridicule and resumed; "one thing is in our favor, we have such jolly fellows in the corps."

"Name some of your companions?"

He complied with this request, but none of the parties mentioned, seemed to possess any interest for his companions; at last he suddenly exclaimed: "Oh! I had almost forgotten one man, who can wring praise from the stern old colonel himself, the favorite of his companions and the idol of the men."

"Who is this Phœnise," cried both of his companions in the same breath, "why he is not a Bohemian; nor yet a Hungarian, but was born in this goodly city."

"Do tell his name?"

"What feminine curiosity, oh! yes, these men are well enough, to carry a lap-dog, pick up a fan, run of an errand, and now both of you are ready to tear me to pieces, to know the name of this doughty hero. I will make a bargain; you countess shall give me the end of your robe, and you princess that opal-ring."

"How silly!" replied the countess.

"Well, I suppose that I will have to gratify you his name is ——

"What!" exclaimed both his companions.

"Do give me time; well his name is Prince Charles Anersperg."

Both ladies looked at each other to see how the intelligence was received; the countess veiled her feelings under a satirical smile, and the princess laughing, said:

"Prince Charles Auersperg!"

"Yes."

"Well, I suppose that he is a man like the rest of his sex, do you remember, countess, how gracefully he looked at the last review."

"I do not trouble my head about such fellows," was the reply. "I was too much engrossed with that old scarred general, who had fought so valiantly against the Turks."

"But I can assure you ladies, that Anersperg does not lack bravery. About three weeks before I came to Vienna, a peasant's hut caught fire, and all were, as we thought saved, when some one exclaimed,

"Old Lizette will surely be lost."

"And who was old Lisette!" inquired both his hearers.

"An aged beggar, who had come to the hovel late, and craved a shelter for the night.

Anersperg heard no more, but exclaiming: "I cannot suffer a fellow creature to suffer so horrible a death without at least trying to save her." In vain we represented that the smoke would blind him; that he would only sacrifice his life and not save her. Our advice was unheeded; he plunged into the flames, mounted the crumbling staircase, with the speed of a deer flying from the hunters, reached her bed, shouldered his helpless burden, and in a few minutes re-appeared, safe. I can tell you the men cheered, and the prim old sergeant Magri, who seems as if made of iron, actually shed tears."

"He was a perfect hero; don't you think so, countess?"

"Oh, the man is well enough, I dare swear, in his way."

"Well enough in his way! You are very cool," said the princess, her eyes flashing fire.

"I certainly shall not take up the cudgels in his defence; no man is worth it."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you one thing about him. One day I went to his room, and what do you think I found on the table, countess?"

"I am sure I cannot tell," said the countess, with the most provoking coolness, at the same time attentively considering the princess.

"But guess."

"Why should I trouble my head about the matter at all?"

"But guess."

"I shall not take the trouble."

"Well princess, you try and see what you can do."

"The countess' answer is mine," replied the princess, tapping her foot impatiently, and playing nervously with her fan.

"Well, then, since you both have so little curiosity, I will tell you unasked. It was a miniature of the countess."

"A miniature of the countess!" exclaimed the Princess Lobkowitz.

"Yes, a miniature of the countess. Is there any thing so remarkable in that?"

"Be careful, captain. Are you sure that it was my miniature. You said on Prince Charles Auersperg's table."

"I can swear to it."

"Countess," asked the princess, "did you give that picture to the prince?"

"What a question! I give my miniature to any man. No, my dear, I love my liberty too well to part with it to any of these mischievous creatures. Sometimes I think I will *go into some religious house* and pet monkeys and parrots. They have, as a general rule, more intelligence than most men. One thing is very certain," continued the countess, with a malicious smile, which added a double sting to her words. "I am not likely to give my affections, unsought, to any man."

The princess blushed scarlet, the captain thunderstruck, gazed at them both silently, but the noble stock from which she sprang, stood the shock bravely. And making a violent effort the princess gaily said:

"As usual, countess, you do not spare your friends. They, as well as your foes, furnish targets for your arrows."

"At least," said the countess, *sotto voce*, "I have planted a dart, which you cannot extract." Then added aloud, with a satanical smile, "No quarter, no quarter. But I give you fair notice Lady of Lobkowitz, and all its broad lands and bright gold, that I will not surrender my lover to any woman in Vienna!"

"Be it so, countess. When I want a lover I shall not ask you, or any other woman. In the meantime do me the favor to taste some wine and confections."

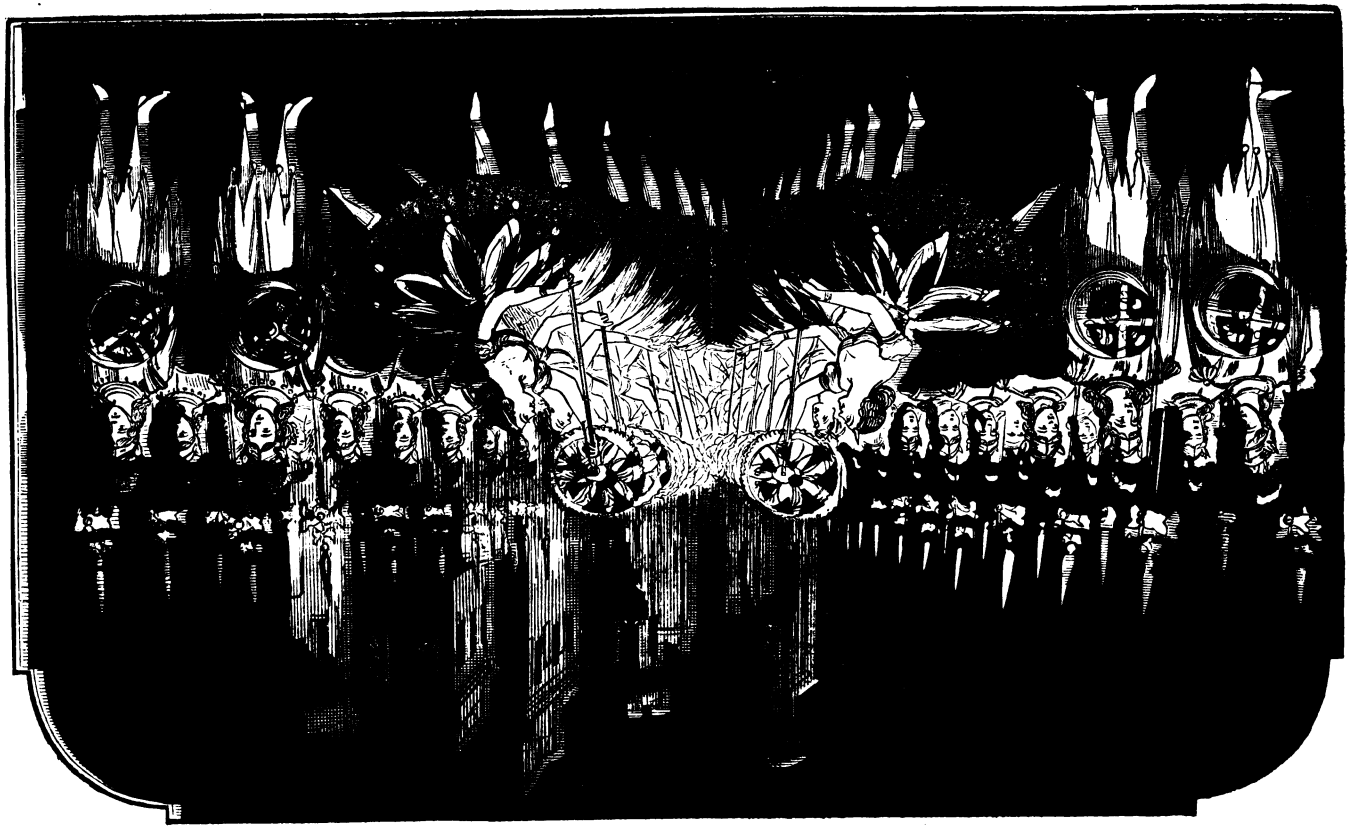
Servants in the antique costume of Bohemia, a style then much affected in Vienna, tendered Tokay and Hock, with sweetmeats on silver salvers, which being duly discussed the company retired. The captain handing the countess to her carriage with a bow, which was slightly returned.

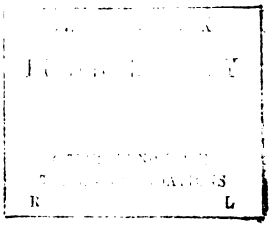
When the gallant officer was alone, his thoughts might have shaped themselves into these words: do these women both love Anersperg? the countess was haughtily triumphant; the princess cut to the soul by her taunts, but resolved to stand her ground. "What can it all mean, well, deuce take me, but it requires a wiser head than mine, to settle such a knotty question; meantime I shall take a decanter of wine, that may perhaps settle my brains."

The captain wended his way to the best hostelry in Vienna, and seating himself at a table, asked for some wine, which was soon put before him; he had scarcely tasted the beverage, ere Black Crook entered and took his seat at the opposite table, calling for some wine. A waiter stepped up, and glancing sharply at the alchemist, said in rather a surly tone, "It is usual, sir, to pay in advance."

"Who doubts my ability to satisfy any demand," was the haughty reply. "Bring the best that the house affords. Why do you hesitate?"

The captain looked up, and taking a piece of gold from his pocket, said, "I will discharge the reckoning."





"By no means replied Hertzog, you are a stranger." A moment's reflection, however, decided him to accept the courtesy, as he might extract some information from his new acquaintance, which might be serviceable hereafter.

"You are in the army, I perceive, sir. I think that it is the custom of most of the young nobles, both of the Empire and its dependencies, to serve in the army."

"Yes."

"Are you a resident of Vienna?"

"Yes."

This won't do, thought the Black Crook, at this rate, I shall gain nothing, if I go on this way.

"I perceive, sir, by that ring on your finger, that you are a judge of precious stones," said Black Crook, with the courtesy he knew so well how to assume. "Will you not do me the favor of looking at this brilliant; report adds that it once belonged to the Shah of Persia."

"Willingly, sir," answered the captain, who had a taste for such baubles; and taking the ring, he examined it closely, and said:

"It is a diamond of the finest water; I have seldom seen its equal. May I ask how it came in your possession?"

"Sir," replied Hertzog, "I purchased this jewel about twenty years ago from a Georgian merchant, who traded with the East, and who, when I bought it, showed me its pedigree, carefully attested and elegantly engrossed on parchment, in Armenian characters. The women of Vienna are exceedingly beautiful."

"I saw one the other day who attracted my notice. She had a rare combination—dark eyes and hair, and a complexion of marble whiteness."

"There is only one lady in Vienna who corresponds to that description, and I pray you tell me who she is," said Black Crook, with an anxiety he did not even seek to disguise.

"The Princess Lobkowitz."

"Married or single?"

"Single, but not, I think, heart whole."

"Who is the favored lover—perhaps yourself."

This last stroke of flattery completely dispelled the little sense with which Nature had blessed the captain, and he answered:

"No, sir I am not so highly favored. The individual whom the Princess Lobkowitz honers with her regards is Prince Charles Auersperg."

"And he loves her in return?"

"I am not so sure of that; at least he has the miniature of another."

"Whose?"

"The Countess Lingotski's."

"Is she as handsome and sprightly as the Princess Lobkowitz."

"She is of a different style, and I think her the prettiest woman in the empire, at least so far as I have seen."

"But does the Princess Lobkowitz love this young man?"

"I should say devotedly."

"Farewell, sir, may you be happy," and with a courtly salutation Black Crook withdrew.

"I know now for whom she wants the elixir. I am not sorry that I met this young spark, but who can she be? She recalls the memories of the past; I thought them buried forever, and yet a look has revived them. I shall not harm her, and for once in the last twenty years I have had one virtuous thought."

CHAPTER V.

A WITCH'S HOUSEHOLD.

What are these?
So withered, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth
And yet are on it. Live, you, or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me
By each at once her choppy finger lying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.—*Macbeth.*

Grepo paced quickly along the streets, scarcely pausing for a moment, and yet there were many things to distract his attention. The stalls of the market were piled with fruit, rude tables in the squares, attended by perambulating cooks, sent forth the most tantalizing odors, which worried the poor lad, who more than half the time scarcely knew what it was to have a satiated appetite, but the fear of the heavy stick and loud reproaches of the Black Crook were incentives and he soon reached his destination.

Barbara Flechner lived in a little street which was not much frequented, a circumstance in her opinion greatly in its favor. The lower part of the house was occupied by a bird fancier, and the ear was saluted on entering with the notes of nightingales, larks, goldfinches, and linnets, mingled with the discordant voices of several large gray parrots; rabbits ran to and fro, monkeys chattered from their perches

and two or three superb Italian greyhounds leaned lazily against the door.

Grepo informed the master of this collection that he wished to see Mistress Flochner.

"Up stairs, my son, and much good may the visit do you."

Grepo heard no more, but was soon in the presence of the party he sought.

Barbara Flechner was now sixty years of age and had never been handsome, time had not robbed her of any charms, but converted features which were before only tolerable into hideous deformity. One tooth, "the sole survivor of his race," was left, the nose was curved, and bore no inconsiderable resemblance to an eagle's beak; the complexion, which was tightly fitted to the bones, might have passed for discolored parchment; the eyes alone retained all their brightness, and shone with a metallic lustre; a dirty turban enveloped her head, from which the gray hair escaped in dishevelled locks; the expression of the whole was repelling to the last degree. Her associate, who was some fifteen years younger, was no less frightful. Originally cast in a better mould than Barbara, she retained some of her former beauty; her eyes sparkled with a fiendish light; her skin was tolerably smooth, and she had not lost a tooth, but in spite of all these advantages no one could look at her without dread and aversion, and the air seemed poluted by her presence.

The apartment occupied by these hags was large and filthy; a starling, gray with age and minus an eye, constantly repeated the most lascivous expressions and blasphemous oaths; a lean black cat and a mangy dog were fighting and snarling; an ostrich's egg hung from the ceiling, and a wax figure, stuck full of pins, lay on the table in the centre of the room; a stuffed owl ornamented one corner, an artificial mermaid the other, and a box was on the floor covered with a cloth.

"Well young man," croaked forth Barbara Flechner, "what is your pleasure with me, and yet methinks I have seen you before."

"My master desireth me to invite you and some of your gossips to pass the evening with him."

"And who is your master?"

"Dr. Wolfgang Hertzog."

"Yes, I know the worthy man, we will both go, shall we not Ursula."

"Aye, marry, that we shall, I remember well the last time, that we were there, we had a jolly time, the red wine flowed like water, and the cathedral clock told four ere we parted."

"What is to be done now?"

"The doctor did not tell me."

"He was wise then; keep your own secrets, and no one can lead you wrong."

"Well, I shall be there, and now, gentle sir, do me the favor of eating a piece of manchet, and taking a glass of strong waters."

"I pray you to hold me excused," said Grepo, who did not feel at all anxious about partaking of the hospitality of his fiendish admirer. "My master will be seriously displeased if I tarry too long; he has only the little black."

"Nonsence, I will make your apologies, sit you down without more ado, and eat, drink, and be merry."

"Aye, youth," said Ursula, "be merry when you have the chance. No one can tell how soon trouble will come."

Barbara opened a huge cupboard containing some surgical preparations, and drawing forth a bottle of some pale liquid, three glasses and a manchet, desired Ursula and Grepo to pledge her—the boy shrank back as the glasses were placed near the ghastly ornament on the table.

"What is the matter with you, boy; of what are you afraid?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Oh, I understand! The pretty dear don't like that sweet little thing that we have on the table; no matter, all men are pretty much alike, my chick, and you'll come to it yet. I remember well when I was in prison."

"Were you ever in prison?"

"Was I in prison, said the younger witch; would you like to hear how I got there?"

"Oh, no, I have no desire."

"Barbara, Barbara," shrieked forth Ursula, choaking with laughter, "see the delicate fellow, it shocks his nerves to hear that a woman was in prison, and tried for her life, but I escaped, and you shall hear the tale."

"I must go," said the youth, imploringly.

"And I say that you shall not," was the witch's rejoinder, with a sneer, "it is useless to talk, you shall not go—come fill out your glass, and drink."

"I would ——."

"I dare say that you would rather not, but then you could not be in better company, than such agreeable ladies, but I will show you a treat; these are Barbara's pets, the dog, cat and bird. But you shall see my favorites;" and as she spoke, Ursula, raised the cover from the box on the floor, and displayed two spotted East Indian snakes; "these are my beauties; one drop from their pretty little mouths, and I guess that any one by whom they are kissed, will soon be stiff. It is surer than any water or drug, I thought I would try; yesterday I bought a rabbit, and put him in the cage, they made quick work with the

little animal, in two hours he was dead; but I shall tell you how I was in prison. I was a miller's daughter, and lived till I was nearly twelve years old happily; but it chanced one day that the lord of the neighboring castle came to the meadow, accompanied by his daughter, who took a fancy to me, and insisted that I should go to Prague with her; my father consented, and I was soon half companion and half servant; I took lessons in French, music and drawing. My young lady had a beau, the Baron Harrach. One day he saw me, and paid me some compliments; I then was virtuous, and knew no harm, though I might have had sense enough to have known that he meant nothing good, but my young lady was very jealous; she covered me with abuse, and struck me, as if the remembrance of the indignity, still kindled the most inextinguishable anger; her eyes blazed, and an expression of diabolical hatred was painted in every feature." After some seconds had ealpsed, Ursula continued: "that blow I never forgave, my mistress said that she had gone too far, loaded me with presents, and earnestly courted a reconciliation. I accepted the gifts, was more submissive than ever, and avoided the Baron; shortly after the lovers were united, and I accompanied the bride to her new residence; time wore on, and the Baroness presented her lord with an heir, and he was as fine a child as I ever saw; but one day he suddenly sickened and died: no one could tell how, or why; I saw the Baroness weep, tear her hair, and rock herself to and fro in her agony, and master, I enjoyed it all; every tear was a gem to me, every sigh a source of the purest delight, I tasted them all with the keenest relish; no miser ever reckoned his ducats with greater pleasure, than I, the woes of my mistress, and yet, the poor wretch thought that I was her most devoted friend, and would frequently say, 'how should I bear this, but for you;' another blossom was given to the house of Harrach, and I was appointed chief nurse, with an elegant room, private table and handsome compensation; six months passed, and he too died; again my lady raved, and again, though wearing a mask of sorrow, I banqueted on her grief, and feasted on her tortures; it was grand to see that these aristocrats felt like the working people; that they in turn, are compelled to wear sack cloth."

Grepo pale and agonized, stammered out.

"All have their troubles."

"Yes, but the rich think that the poor have no hearts or souls; feed a dog, and he will love you, attack your enemy, and if necessary die for you, but toil and slave for the rich and well born, and they think that a ducat, a half-worn dress, a jewel which has lost its novelty, or a smile a sufficient compensation. Boy, you do not know these titled hounds, and as she spoke Ursula drew herself up, and extended her arm, with a species of rude tragic dignity. But I have not come to the end yet. The Baron was suddenly taken ill, day and night I watched him, he languished, and soon breathed his last. Nobles are mortal as well as peasants, and my lord was borne to his final resting place, with all the honors due to his rank. The torches were extingnished, a prince of the blood paid the last honors, and a herald proclaimed the titles of one who was now a heap of dust. Again my lady Baroness was in the depths of affliction, and I a third time consoled her; but her uncle came, examined the papers of the late Baron, ascertained that some important documents were missing, and declared that if they were not found, the castle would be gone, and the Baroness would be limited to a very small income."

"Suspicion fell upon all the servants. We were apprehended, the others set at liberty, because nothing could be alleged against them; whereas I was so unfortunate as to have in my possession a few grains of a subtle Indian drug, which produces a very singular effect, when suddenly administered, the patient loses his appetite, pines and eventually dies, apparently there is nothing the matter with him; after some months, and many efforts to make me confess, I was finally set at liberty; now you have my story. Come let us drink success to doctor Wolfgang Hertzog."

Bumpers were drunk to the health of the Black Crook, and the lad rose to depart, when Ursula asked "what he thought of the pretty little ornament on the table."

"Ornament! I cannot see that it is particularly handsome; it is only a wax figure, with pins stuck all over, particularly in the vicinity of the head."

"That is the beauty of it, but since you are so unsophisticated, I will tell you more; that figure represents my bitterest foe, and I daily stick a pin in the most sensitive part of the body, and then the person whom it represents suffers accordingly."

"Yes shortly." replied Grepo.

"Now, said Barbara, one more glass [illegible] we part to the powers of evil."

"No, by heavens," exclaimed Grepo, 'pen what may, I will not drink that to[illegible]

And flying down stairs he walked rapidly home told Black Crook, that his associates would wait on him at the time appointed, and felt thankful that he had even such a refuge where he was at least safe from such infernal companionship, and where though badly fed, and

worse clad, he had some instants he could call his own.

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND INTERVIEW OF THE PRINCESS LOBKOWITZ WITH THE BLACK CROOK.

"Believe me, my lord, you may search heaven and earth, and you will find no being more vindictive than a jealous woman; crime loses all its horrors, if she can only accomplish her ends."—*Spanish Friar.*

Ten days after her last interview with the Countess Lingotski, the Princess Lobkowitz had thought of nothing else; one object alone presented itself to her mind, her rival cherished by the man she would have died to serve; imagination pictured the young officer in the solitude of his chamber, gazing at the picture of her rival, while she the daughter of a lordly house was spurned. The idea was insupportable, and then she well remembered the smile of haughty triumph, with which the countess made her parting courtesy: true, she had met the Lingotski, they had conversed. She was too much a woman of the world to allow her mortification to be seen, but her grief and indignation, were not the less poignant in this emergency, she resolved to consult the Black Crook again, and after deliberating for some moments, desired her page to summon Bertha, her confidential attendant, whom she thus addressed:

"Bertha I shall require your services this evening at eight o'clock."

"Shall I tell Michael to have the carriage ready then?"

"No, be silent about it; you may retire now; but stay I shall need a peasant's dress; bring it me in my dressing room at seven. Should the prince ask if I am going out with him, say that I am confined to my room by a severe indisposition; and have given the most positive orders not to be disturbed."

Once more alone, she took up her book, but soon laid it aside; the image of her hated rival was ever present; a musical instrument was next tried, but with no better success; a walk in the garden to view some choice plants, that had just arrived, succeeded no better than the other occupations; the one idea was permanent, and one hated image presented itself.

Dinner was announced with a profound bow by the majordomo, and the princess, passing through a line of liveried lackeys, was duly presented to some foreign celebrities, who then happened to be in Vienna, and attracted the notice of a vieux debauché beau, who at the age of sixty cherished the idea that his huge paddings, and false ringlets, gave him the aspect of five and twenty! This superannuated coxcomb, imagined himself irresistible.

"Was your highness on the Platz this morning."

"I have not left the palace to-day I have been and still am indisposed. I walked in the garden before dinner, in the expectation that air and exercise would relieve me, but they did not produce the desired effect. I suppose that your lordship as usual was mounted on your fine cream colored Arabian.

"Yes, I never fail to ride."

"Who did you see worthy of note?"

"Two or three dowagers, with their lap dogs, were taking their morning airings; there was only one woman worth seeing."

"And pray, if I may be so bold; who was the lady, you honor so highly."

"One who disputes with you the admiration of the court, camp, and city, and I will, if you will pardon me, mention the peerless countess Lingotski."

"You are right said the princess, with the most unshaken composure, "the countess bears the palm from all her competitors; few excell her in beauty, none in wit."

"You over estimate her talents and personal charms,"

"No, I am only just. Was the countess alone?"

"No, she was driving in the landau of the Princess Lubomirski."

"The Princess Lubomirski, I do not know her."

"A noble Polish lady, who possesses immense estates in lower Poland, the aunt of the young Prince Auersperg, who has just arrived in Vienna, after an absence of nearly twenty years; she was a particular friend of your late mother."

"I shall do myself the honor of calling on her; but I thought the young prince was with his regiment in Bohemia?"

"He was, but the emperor heard lately, that he had rescued an old woman from a burning hut, and summoned him to the capital, to thank him in person."

"Has he been presented?"

"Yesterday he was admitted to a private audience. His imperial majesty heard the whole story from his own lips, and at its conclusion, drawing a costly diamond from his finger, requested that Auersperg would wear it for his sake."

The Princess made a sign, the stirrup cup was handed to the guests, and in a few moments all had quitted the palace. It was only four o'clock, and she could not go out till seven. The hours seemed to move on leaden

wings, and she might have exclaimed with the love-stricken Juliet,

"Gallop apace ye fiery footed steeds."

To relieve her ennui, she repaired to the library, then reckoned the finest in that part of Austria, and endeavored to lose herself in the vast twelve tomed romances, then so much in vogue in Europe; but unsuccessfully. The despairding lovers, who made speeches, a dozen pages long; and their mistresses, who replied in fourteen, had lost their charms; and after idly turning over a few pages, she replaced the volume; in so doing, a small parchment covered book fell at her feet, she stooped to pick it up, and involuntarily opened it. It was a rare MSS. of the tenth century, written in golden characters, in the Hungarian dialect, on purple vellum; it possessed a particular charm, and had been purchased at an immense price, by one of the founders of the Jagellons, from whom the princess traced her descent, through her mother; and had been part of her movable possessions. Struck with the whole appearance of the MSS., the princess determined to submit it to the Black Crook; the family chronicle was next consulted, to see if she could glean any information concerning this mysterious volume; and to her great surprise found he following entry, which we lay before our readers·

"A rare MSS. of the tenth century, on violet parchment, bought by the right honorable and most noble, the Princess Dolgoroski, when she married the prince Lobkowitz; purchased by one of the ancestors of the said noble lady, from a learned Jew at Jerusalem, when the gallant knight was fighting the battle of the 'Holy Cross;' this is supposed to treat of magic and the occult sciences."

The princess glanced at the pendule, it was only five o'clock, two hours more must elapse, ere she could go; how should she pass the time; 'I will send for old Josepha, she shall tell me one of her weird tales; I never knew her yet to fail.' Touching the bell, her maid stood before her, whom she desired to bring her gold thread, and tell Josepha that she was needed in the library.

Josepha was the oldest member of the prince's household, and was born and had been brought up in a remote part of Bohemia; she always wore her national costume, the high turban, short petticoat, and striped stockings of her native land; a rosary of ebony and gold hung by her side, and a large ruby ring on her middle finger, was the gift of the late princess. She had seen the roses of more than seventy Junes, and was still active and vigorous. Entering the library, she dropped a courtesy, and asked *what her young mistress was* pleased to want; and was informed that one of her old would be exceedingly acceptable

"A gleam of pleasure stole across her wrinkled but cheerful face, and her dark eyes sparkled with pleasure."

"What would it please the young princess to hear."

"Any thing you choose Josepha. Your store is inexhaustible."

"I will do my best," said the old woman, taking out her knitting, and seating herself.

After a few moments recollection. She commenced with a tale of kightly chivalry. One of the early cavaliers of the family of Lobkowitz, had accompanied the saintly king of France, Louis the Ninth, to the holy land, and registered a vow, that he would neither shave nor marry till that sacred soil was rescued from the infidel, and till the cross should supplant the crescent; he had acquainted his confessor, a saintly monk, who had accompanied the expedition, with his vow, but the holy man replied that the flesh was weak, and that men should be careful how they so bound themselves, that he, for one, was not partial to such contracts. Sternly forbade the knight to keep it, and that he must consider himself a free man for one year, adding by way of penance, that he should be particularly charitable to the poor and wounded soldier; the cavalier bowed low, and strictly obeyed the behests of his ghostly father. The name of the gallant Lobkowitz was held in gratitude and veneration throughout the camp. Many a wounded comrade had been solaced in the last fatal hour by his tender and gentle attention; he had wiped many a fevered brow, and held many a refreshing draught to the lips of the sick. Yet his heart was untouched, all his brothers in arms, wore the device and colors of some lady love; shivered lances in her honor, and chanted her praises in stanzas of rude poetry, but Lobkowitz did neither; day after day was he rallied by his companions, and —"Selim (his horse,) is my best friend At the siege of Acre, he fought with the most determined bravery, was wounded, became unconscious, and when he recovered his senses, found himself in a rich tent, with a kind woman, who put a cooling potion to his lips, at the same time motioning him to be silent.

Two days thus passed; on the third having recovered measurably the use of his faculties, he asked his nurse in the linguis franca, then spoken in the East, where he was.

"In, the tent of Emir Saadi Hamet, "who stands high in the favor of his royal master the Sultan."

"But who brought me here?"

"Our gracious master, whom may Allah protect, found your knightship on the ground, apparently dead from loss of blood. He felt your pulse, and found that there was still some life left." A small jewelled hand lifted the curtain. The knight raising himself on his elbows could just see the tip of a fairy slipper.

"My mistress has just signified to me," said the attendant, "that you must be silent for the present, and further requests that you will drain this cup; it will be useless for you to talk, as I shall not answer any more questions."

The knight was thus compelled to be silent, sunk into a deep slumber, and did not wake till late on the following day, when he was perfectly recovered.

His old nurse came into the tent, expressed her pleasure at seeing him so greatly improved, and clapping her hands, a negro entered with his arms and jewels, and he heard outside the neighing of his generous and faithful Selim. "This is indeed noble. Where is the emir, that I can thank him for his courtesy and chivalrous hospitality."

"His highness is not here."

"Can I then see his daughter?"

"The customs of our land do not permit the Turkish damsels to hold converse with infidels."

"Be pleased, then, to take these few gold pieces as a small guerdon of what I owe you, and beg your mistress' acceptance of this trifle," handing, as he spoke, an emerald of great purity and beauty.

"I shall not fail to represent the matter properly. Farewell cavalier; may the god who watches over Turks and Pagans alike, defend and protect you."

Time passed, Lobkowitz left Jerusalem, and on his way home, when in Cairo, saw a tall negro, who showed him the emerald he had given to the Princess Faterna, with these words, "follow me." He there saw the idol of his heart, who was baptized by the old chaplain who united them in marriage. "From this pair you are descended. Pearl of my thoughts, my tale is ended, may you be as happy as they."

"Alas!" said the princess with a sigh, "Faterna was so fortunate, as to have her love returned." The recital had so far charmed the princess, that she forgot all her own sorrows till the conclusion of the tale.

Seven o'clock at length arrived, and the princess dismissing Josepha with a liberal gratuity, at once summoned Bertha, and hastily *clothing herself in the peasants dress, put some gold in her bosom,* threw a veil over her head, and motioned to her attendant to precede her. They quitted the palace by a small postern gate, of which the princess alone had the key, and soon found themselves in the street.

"What way shall we take, madam?"

"That you will soon see," said the princess, going into a side street. Alleys, lanes and streets were passed, and yet they had not reached their destination; the Princess evidently was not inclined to converse, and Bertha had too much tact to intrude on her mistress' reverie. At last the princess paused before the front door of the Black Crook's mansion.

"Surely, your highness, is not coming here."

"Peace, silly girl this is precisely my destination."

"What! To enter the abode of that infamous quack, sorcerer and magician, we shall scarcely return home alive."

"I say again peace; nay, more I am accustomed to give commands to such as you not receive them; you shall not go, and if I find that you betray that I have been here, a dagger and an unknown grave shall be your portion. You shall not cumber the earth long, but if you are silent, I will give you a rich dowry when you marry, and as an earnest of my intention, my pearl necklace shall be yours."

Awed by the imperious manner of the princess, and influenced by her generosity, Bertha signified that she would maintain the most inviolable secrecy.

Satisfied on this head, the princess rapped gently at the door of the mansion, the little negro extending his hand gently, pushed her back to signify that she could not enter, not discouraged by this rebuff, the princess held a gold piece before the dwarf. The manikin's eyes glittered at the sight of the precious metal, and eagerly clutching the coin, he threw open the door, silenced a huge mastiff who eyed the visitors as if questioning their right to enter, pointed to an antique oak settee, which ran the full length of the hall, and signified that they should seat themselves and wait, while he went in search of his master, at the same time lighting a silver lamp, fed with aromatic oil, which diffused a very grateful odor; in ten minutes he returned followed by his master.

"You are doubtless surprised to see me here docter?" was the salutation of the princess.

"You are welcome at all times to such aid, as my poor abilities can offer you; how can so wretched an individual as myself serve you?"

"The resources of your art, will be of immense value, my life; nay, more than my life is at stake."

"Well enter my private apartment; the damsel can remain in the passage."

Taking a key from his bosom the Black Crook signed to the princess to enter, and she, saw herself in the apartment, where she had made her first visit, which was now lighted with wax torches. The Black Crook, drawing forward a large chair, requested the princess to be seated and standing awaited her command.

"I believe the last time that I was here you promised me a charm, which would inspire affection."

"True!"

"Have you prepared it yet?"

"It will require some time, but no time shall be lost."

"I have a book," said the princess, producing the MSS. she had found in the library, perhaps it may be of some use to you.

"Let me see it."

The MSS. was submitted to him and Black Crook pondering long over the characters exclaimed:

"Whence got you this, lady,"

"You will excuse me telling you, but its rarity and value are plain."

"Yes, there is one duplicate of it in existence in the library at Granada. There is one receipt here of great value; if I have the tapers it shall be tried."

Summoning the negro, he gave him some instructions, which were received with great deference, and the dwarf stole from the room to do the bidding of his master, and the magician prepared to execute his spell.

He threw a mantle of blue velvet, thickly embroidered with stars and representations of the sun and moon, over his doublet; a breastplate of rare and costly gems glittered on his bosom; a staff, ending in an elephant's head, set with pearls, was grasped in his right hand; andals of pale yellow satin, glittering with rubies, encased his feet, and gloves of a similar material his hands; a large mitre-shaped cap of white cloth of silver with lappets rested on his brow: unlike the other, this was embroidered with representations of flames; and a sash of the same color as the mantle, completed his equipment.

The dwarf entered, bearing a small box which he handed to his master, who opened it, displaying four large candles of ruby colored wax. These were taken out, carefully examined, and approved.

"Lady," said the Black Crook, "I must ask you to unveil."

The negro, who had gone into the entry, now returned, and intimated by signs that a *woman wished to see his master.*"

"Was she young?" queried the Black Crook

"No."

"Handsome?"

"No."

"Tell her I cannot see her. Let no one enter—vanish."

The negro made his usual obeisance and retired.

Once more alone with the princess, the Black Crook erected an altar, but of boards covered with velvet, which he produced from a closet, placed bouquets of flowers at intervals, surmounting them with the figure of an elephant superbly carved in silver, four candlesticks of the same metal of elegant shapes and grotesque designs, each held a ruby colored taper, the first was a goat, the second a lion the third a camel, and the fourth a rhinoceros—a horn of the same animal, cleaned, perfumed and mounted in silver, constituted an ornament. The tapers were then lighted and the rites commenced.

A richly chased censer was filled with gum, and a fragrant vapor floated through the room. Five small phials were next taken from Black Crook's bosom and the contents mingled in a large vase; the liquid assumed various hues, but settled into a dull brown. At this stage of the rites, the black presenting himself stood before his master, and, crossing his hands on his bosom, awaited a sign.

"Some one wants me?"

A nod, signifying the affirmative.

"No one can come in. I will not be interrupted—retire."

The black, after another salaam, returned to his post.

"I will come in—you cannot prevent me!" said a female voice.

Black Crook changed color, shook in every limb, and cast an agonizing glance at the door. His suspense was very brief.

A gipsey of about forty-five entered the room. Originally nature had endowed her with great beauty, but time, exposure to the weather, and a life of some hardship had robbed her of some of her charms, but she still retained a clear bronze complexion, flashing lustrous eyes, a queenly neck and bust; all her motions were graceful and dignified, and as she stood before the sorceror she looked an empress and he the most miserable of her subjects. Wrapping a black woollen mantle closely around her, she said in a tone of high contempt, at the same time producing a ruby ornament in the shape of a heart pierced with an arrow—

"Know you this?"

"Can it be that you are—"

"Yes, I am Catalina de Souza, and my

gipsy blood, vagrant as I am and have been, boils at the sight of one—"

"Enough; leave me now—I will see you at any other time."

Partially persuaded, the gipsey yielded a sullen consent, and turning to leave the apartment, her eye rested on the princess. She stopped, and looking at her said in a scarcely audible tone:

"Tell me, in God's name, who you are and whence you come."

"I am the Princess Lobkowitz, the only daughter, and sole heiress of the prince Lobkowitz; and I am not accustomed to be interrogated by strangers, whom I do not honor; it is unusual and impertinent, and I beg it may not be repeated. My business with the doctor is pressing, and I do not wish to be interrupted."

"I beseech you Catalina, to retire, and call whenever you choose, I will then speak with you."

Catalina trembled, regarded the princess, as if she longed to clasp her in an embrace; and after casting a look of mingled hatred and despair at the Black Crook, left them alone.

"Who is that woman?" asked the princess.

"A gipsey whom I knew in Spain. I thought that she was dead long since," answered the Black Crook, with his usual coolness. "Let us proceed."

Closely inspecting the mixture, he stirred it with a silver rod, and it emitted lustrous sparks; "the charm begins to work, I shall prepare the philtre to-nigh. The MSS. calls for rare drugs; I shall search among my collection, to see if I have them, if not, I shall send out"

"Grepo, where are you?" exclaimed he in a loud voice.

"Here I am master."

"Go to my chamber, bring me the case of minerals, on the table, and remain within call, in case I need your services."

The adept referred to the MSS., and made some extracts; the minerals were placed before him: selecting three small lumps, he reduced them to an almost impalpable powder; and putting them on a small gold plate, applied a match: watched the mixture till it was reduced to ashes, and gathering up the residue, poured it in a phial, to which he added liquors from two different jars.

"Here princess, you will find what I have promised, put this in any liquid that you will, and the man or woman, who partakes of this, will doat to adoration on the next creature that he sees, be it man or woman, bird or beast;" he hesitated, but finally added, "I think that *you will find this effective.*"

Bertha was summoned, bows exchanged, and the princess was *en route* for the palace, which she reached a little after midnight, and before her absence had been noticed.

CHAPTER VII.

A SOLDIER'S QUARTERS.

"These soldiers, game, drink and play sometimes they are idle, and sometimes exceedingly industrious;—but I can tell you sir, that war when properly pursued is a noble calling."—*Lope de Vega.*

"Ah captain glad to see you, we have not met for nearly a century."

"Not quite that long," answered his friend; who was no other than prince Charles Auersperg.

The two men were well contrasted, Auersperg was tall, and of a creamy whiteness, but his cheek would sometimes flush like the interior of a damask rose, his eyes were of a deep rich blue, bordering on violet; and he was tall, slender and well made. His companion was of a bolder type, of the same stature, he had a more commanding presence; his eyes were dark hazel; and his hair of a rich chestnut brown, hung in short waving curls. The apartment was large, well lighted, and was hung with portraits of distinguished generals, and emperors; it was the head quarters of the imperial guard, and was a general lounge for all the young officers of Vienna.

"Well, now, I suppose that you are here for at least a month. That exploit of yours about the old hag, has made all the women crazy to see you, and all the men confoundedly jealous."

"I only did my duty, Lichtenstien."

"Be that as it may, you are the hero of th day; and I am afraid that we poor fellows, who have no such laurels to show, must act as your shadows."

"Who are now the reigning belles of the metropolis?"

"Two women now divide the empire of fashion, the Princess Lobkowitz, who in addition to her fascinations of mind and body, can rank herself as the heiress of many broad acres, and a hoard of ducats; the other is the Countess Lingotski, a belle, a wit, and a beauty; but not so rich as the other; you have seen both."

"Which do you prefer?"

"That is a hard question, you might as well ask a man if he would refuse a crown."

"Lingotski is exceedingly witty. In fact, all the men are afraid of her, and some of the women too; she has as sharp a tongue, as I

ever heard; Lobkowitz is not much her inferior, but the other can distance most of her competitors; you can marry who you please."

"Do not be too sure of that."

"Why, how you talk, young, rich, well-born; just now the recipient of an imperial gift, and high in the emperor's favor. I don't know a man who is so advantageously situated; and then too, you have been recently admitted to a private audience, and presented with a diamond ring. But, count, as you are so much in the beau monde, do tell me where I can see these beauties?"

"See these beauties! why, on the Platz, at the ridotto; or do you know the Baroness Teleki? She sees masks to-night, and all the world and his wife will be there; not the slightest difficulty about it; I will see her ladyship, and you shall have a card."

"By the way, Lichtenstein, who is this Black Crook, about whom, the public are so anxious?"

"The Black Crook! Oh! yes, his real name is Wolfgang Hertzog; a man of rare talent, an alchemist, a physician, and report adds, that he dabbles too, a little in magic, but you shall see him, and judge for yourself."

"The commander-in-chief," said an orderly, bowing, as he entered the room, desires the honor of Count Lichtenstein's company, as early as his convenience will permit;" and, saluting, the soldier withdrew.

"Confound that old martinet, we no sooner get into a chat, but I am wanted; *au revoir*, till this evening; for I shall surely see you at the masquerade," and he hurried off.

"What a strange thing!" mused the count, "that for an act of simple humanity, I am so greeted everywhere, and before I left, scarcely any one cared for me, and now I am warmly saluted wherever I go. Yet things are changed even in six months; there was that poor artist, Rossi, who left Italy, in the hopes of making a fortune at Vienna, and who died of a broken heart; he gave me all he had, a picture of the Countess Lingotski, for which he had two or three sittings, and she then forgot all about it. I took it to my quarters, and occasionally looked at it to remind me of my poor friend."

A foot-step was heard on the staircase, a rap at the door was answered, by an invitation to enter, and the Gypsey stood before the Prince.

"Well, can I serve you?"

"I wished to see Count Lichtenstein, but, he is not here; I will come again." She turned as if to go, and then said: "will you tell the Count Lichtenstein, that private Moritz is exceedingly ill, and would like to see him."

"*I shall not fail to deliver your message,* you say that a soldier is ill, perhaps lacks the necessaries of life; take this piece of gold, and tell him that it is the gift of a comrade."

"I shall not fail to deliver your message and gift; but please give me your hand. I have some skill in palmistry."

"I have no faith in that science, but to please you, I will consent."

The sybil grasped the hand extended to her, and fixed her eyes on the count's face, for a moment, then carefully studies the lines before her, "there is no blood here, and this hand has never been given to betray, this man has a noble nature. Beware of treachery; two women love you; you will choose the one most devoted to you, but after some trouble; you must beware of magic; keep free from the insidious wiles of the tempter; farewell, may you be happy. The man who can pity the misfortunes of his fellows, and extend aid to the deserving, merits the choicest smiles of fortune. May you be happier than I have ever been."

"Permit me," said the prince, "to offer you a trifle. I believe it is the custom with most of your tribe to receive a guerdon."

"You will excuse me. I can take nothing from you, my poor friend is alone. I must hasten to his couch," and as Auersperg could say no more, Catalina left him.

Strange beings that we are peering into the future, which heaven so mercifully veils. That woman can predict nothing with any certainty, and yet her predictions have strangely annoyed me. Two women in love with me, and for what? I am a younger son, and not likely ever to be richer than I am, and yet Lichtenstein tells me that I can do as I please here. I have a leave of absence before me, and I will improve it; and talking of beauty, if Lichtenstein gets me that card, I will go and at least see how the Vienna belles will receive me; but who can that strange figure be on the other side of the street. The boys are pelting him; this must not be, he is old, and from his attire in the depths of poverty. I will go and beat off his adversaries."

Black Crook had crossed the street as shabbily attired as usual, the day was balmy, and a number of lads attracted by the mildness of the weather, were playing at ball; one more mischievous than the others, flung a stone at the old man, and his example was followed by the rest of this juvenile crowd; stones, apple cores and mud were fired; one of these missiles had struck the Black Crook on the forehead, and the wound was bleeding; the adept presented a pitiful sight, and his tormentors exhausted all the epithets be

nished by a rich and copious language. "Where is the raven? call for him now, and see if he can keep you, send for the black cat; see if she cannot help you."

Auresperg flew to the old man's assistance, repelled some of his adversaries. and when he saw them at a distance, asked where he should take him.

"I fear, sir," said the Black Crook, "that I am taxing your courtesy too much, with many thanks for your gracious assistance. I can now find my way home." The count thus dismissed, bowed with an air of ceremonious civility, which was only returned.

This action of Auersperg was noticed by a body of his fellow officers, who joined him and sportively observed:

"What will you do next? First you save an old woman, and then you are the defender of an old man, who can tell what will happen to-morrow? I should not be surprised if the Black Crook would leave you some of his ducats," said a witty lieutenant.

"Let him keep them for some one who wants them more than I. But is that the famous Black Crook?"

"No other."

"You have assisted one of the most faithful emissaries of his Satanic majesty. Perhaps he will work a spell in your favor. You are now master to do as you please, as you have all the spirits both good and bad on your side."

"Well, gentlemen, rally me as much as you please. And now, if you have no better engagement, let us mount our horses and away to the St. Stephen's Platz."

The Viennese of that period, then as now, were amateurs of horses, and the animals bred by the officers in question were generally of the purest breed and exquisitely formed. The Platz was soon reached, and a number of carriages were already in the ring.

A heavy lumbering coach was the centre of attraction, and every cavalier who passed was sure to raise his heavily plumed hat.

"Who is in that carriage?" asked Auersperg of his companion.

"The fair and rich Princess Lobkowitz," was the reply.

The prince's curiosity was excited, and approaching as near as politeness would permit, saw one of the ladies mentioned an hour before chaperoned by a female relative, who generally appeared with her in public.

"She is extremely beautiful," was the prince's observation after a long survey, "and is much improved since I saw her last."

The princess, who was on the look out for *Auersperg, saw him* as he reined up his steed *and gazed at the carriage*. "He shall be mine, cost what it may. He is a conquest worth having, and my triumph will be doubly great if I can succeed in snatching him from that odious Lingotski." Still not a muscle moved, nothing betrayed the tempest that was raging within, and she replied to the commonplace observations of her companion about the weather and the crowd frequenting the Platz when it was clear, with an air of cool indifference.

A few paces further on, a vehicle holding two, drove rapidly past, and all the gentlemen eagerly saluted the inmate who was there with a female friend. These civilities were graciously returned, but the prince was particularly noticed.

"I am in luck. The prettiest woman in Vienna deigns to court me."

"Now, prince, you have seen both the belles of Vienna; which do you admire the most."

"It is so long since I was in a saloon with either that I cannot judge."

The crowds passed and repassed in the Platz and the *creme de la creme*, graduully fatigued of the monotony, sought other amusements."

The countess, in her usual spirits, returned to her palace.

"He is mine," she thought. "Flatter a man's vanity, and you can move him to any purpose that you choose. I shall yet be the Princess of Auersperg! That haughty Lobkowitz shall never carry off the handsomest and bravest officer in the imperial army!"

The Princess Lobkowitz drove to a restaurant near the old church of the Capuchins to take some light refreshments, which were duly set before her. While discussing the ices, and trifling with some fruit, a little boy approached with a basket containing some toys in carved wood, and besought her to purchase. The princess languidly turned over the articles, and selecting a box ornamented with a wreath of forget-me-nots, asked the price.

"I am sorry to refuse you, but that box is reserved for another. Won't you take this?" showing a small but exquisitely carved vase.

"I will take this. What is the price?"

"Five florins;" the money was paid; the princess drove away, and when in the privacy of her apartment, looked at her new aquisition; and examining it closely, saw a piece of folded paper, which she opened, and read the following words:

"You were seen last night, accompanied by your maid, crossing the bridge; and you afterwards went to the residence of the Black Crook. Beware of meddling with him; the man or woman, who dabbles in magic, will be surely lost beyond all redemption.

A friend, who is deeply interested in your

welfare, has ventured to send you these few lines."

While the princess was pondering over this billet, the door was suddenly thrown open, and the same woman, she had seen at the Black Crook's, rushed in, and throwing herself at the princess' feet, earnestly begged that she might be taken into her service.

"My compliment of women is full, and I must refer you to the housekeeper; I rarely nterfere in domestic matters."

"But lady, give me a place, no matter how humble in your palace."

"I have just told you, that it is impossible."

"Oh, no, that cannot be, to the rich all things are possible; let me have but the humblest corner in your palace, and I will do your bidding; give me but the meanest place, in this immense establishment, and grant me but the pleasure of looking at you, waiting on you, and I will be satisfied with a look, or an occasional smile; lady let me stay, and I will be your guardian genius."

The princess still hesitated, and at last said: "I yield to your request; go to old Josepha, and she will tell you what to do." A look was exchanged, which said, "do not tell where you have seen me;" which was answered by another, which as plainly said: "I will be silent—you need not be anxious."

CHAPTER VIII.

A MASQUERADE AT THE BARONESS TELEKI'S.

"Are you going to the masquerade, my dear?"

"Why would you have me so much out of fashion, all the ton is to be there."

"Well I shall go as Venus."

"Venus, (aside,) why the woman is as old as the hills."—*La vida es un sueno.*

When the prince arrived at his palace, he found that the count had been mindful of his promise; that an invitation had arrived from the Baroness Teleki, and that the costumes were "*de rigueur.*"

"I certainly shall go," and summoning his valet, declared that he must procure him a suitable equipment.

"What would you propose?"

"I think that a Turkish turban, vest, jewelled dagger, and pointed slippers, would suit your highness' style."

"*You are right, go to the shop of* Baba Mustapha, and ask him in my name, if he can hire me what I want, and be speedy, for I have not much time to lose."

The Turk who was a sincere though humble friend of the prince, cheerfully furnished the necessary articles. And the prince when duly attired, might readily have been mistaken for a dashing cavalier of Constantinople; and steppingi nto his carriage, was soon driven to the scene of the festivities.

The Baroness Teleki, whose husband had fallen in one of the wars against the Prussians, had worn mourning forty years for her gallant lord. Her residence, in rather a retired part of the city, was rather substantially than elegantly built. Two silent Hungarian soldiers, acting as a guard of honor, narrowly scrutinized all who entered.

The interior was furnished with the sombre magnificence of the middle ages; marble staircases, with heavy railings, in the form of twisted serpents, led to the upper apartments; pieces of grim statuary stood at intervals on the landings; boys in the costumes of Chinese Mandarins, escorted the male guests to the dressing rooms in the upper part of the palace, where two aged and faithful servitors presided over the apartment assigned to the sterner part of creation; and two bloomin[illegible] peasant girls, lately from Carinthia, were in assidious attendance upon the female guests.

Below, the baroness in person, unmasked, stood near one of the principal entrances. Though advanced in years, the lady still retained traces of former beauty. The apartments on the first floor corresponded with the faded magnificence of the rest of the mansion. Heavy clawfooted chairs and long couches of ebony and blue velvet, pictures of the heads of the Teleki family—cardinals, generals, bishops, and courtiers—and tarnished Venetian mirrors in heavy frames ornamented the saloons. The ceiling was painted in fresco, representing the loves of Cupid and Psyche, and the whole was rendered nearly as light as day by countless numbers of wax candles.

A motley crowd filled the saloons and halls, and presented the oddest costumes. A Savoyard with his brushes, chanting a Swiss ditty, was the attendant of a Circassian princess; an Eastern sultana was in earnest conversation with a Roman bandit; an Egyptian devisa was whispering soft nothings in the ear of an Italian peasant. The world seemed reversed.

A woman in the costume of a Spanish duchess of the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, clad in black velvet, with a coronet of diamonds, attracted the attention of the company. "Who is she?" "Whence does she come?" "It is the English ambassadress?" were chea[illegible]

lated round the room. Complimentary speeches were made in all the languages of continental Europe, but the incognita deigned no reply, nor would she accept of any civilities, no matter by whom offered.

Another mask, equally striking, made her appearance. Clad as a Tartar peasant, she also shunned the observation of any of the guests, but seemed as if hunting for some one.

Auersperg, masked, endeavored to fathom the mystery surrounding the Spaniard, and tendered the usual courtesies of the time.

"Would madame take a glass of Tokay, or an ice?"

A slight though courteous negative was the sole reply.

"Would madame have a glass of water?"

A hand was extended to take it. A flower fell at the prince's feet, but he could not tell whence it came. A mask, dressed as a Tyrolean burgher's wife, addressed him:

"Gentle knight, do you love?"

"I may safely say that I hate no one."

"That is not the question. Are you seriously in love? I pray you answer me."

"I am not."

"Will you pledge me to that effect in a glass of Tokay?"

Not one word of this conversation was lost by the Spanish duchess (for so we shall call the incognita).

"What can she mean?" was the mental comment. "Pledge her in a glass of Tokay? I shall watch her motions narrowly."

The Countess Lingotski, for it was indeed she, drew still nearer the prince and the Tyrolean. There was some mystery which she was determined to solve. The wine was brought by a page on a large salver, and the lady presented the cavalier with a glass. This was not unnoticed by the duchess, who apparently missed her footing, stumbled against he Turk, and contrived to overturn the glass, upon which she immediately set her foot and ground it to atoms. The Tartar peasant suddenly stepped up, and the duchess, as if fearing a collision, as suddenly retired.

A conjuror, with a tray before him, called to all who wished to have their fortunes told, or their destinies assigned.

The duchess, the Tyrolean, and the Tartar peasant all gathered around the pretended seer, who was clad like a harlequin, a hideous mask, an immense hump, and a large mantle completed his disguise.

"Lady," said he, suddenly addressing the duchess, "will you permit me to foretell your future destiny, either by cards or the stars?"

No reply.

"Nay, lady, take a jest."

Still no answer.

"Who can it be?"

"No matter," said a voice at his elbow, whose owner was clad as a Laplander, "we shall soon see, when supper is announced. You know that it is a rule in Vienna, that when that meal is served all the guests shall unmask."

"Lady," resumed the wizard, "do let me cast a horoscope for you and see what can be done?"

A sudden shake of the head, intimated that the speaker's proposition was negatived.

"Not for the sake of a little amusement."

The same motion of the head was repeated.

The Tartar whispered in the ear of the Tyrolean.

"Do not despond. I have another philter prepared, as the Black Crook did yours the other night, and by himself; here it is, if you will put your hand behind you, I can slip it unperceived."

The instructions were followed, and the princess was again possessed of her treasure.

"Now," thought she, "how shall I administer the charm a second time."

The Princess (for our readers must have already guessed that it was she, under the garb of a Tyrolean) whispered her thanks to the Tartar, who briefly replied, "I shall always watch over you, and retired to a little distance, but still near enough to the princess, to watch all her motions: a mask dressed as the Grand Lama, had joined the duchess, or rather countess, and for a time endeavored, but vainly, to engage her in conversation; at last a word and a name, seemed to attract her; she accepted his arm, and they walked away at a little distance.

The Tartar came up, and asked in a feigned tone.

"Do you want any thing?"

"Yes, two glasses of wine."

"Courteous Pagan," said the princess, again accosting the prince.

"We have been unlucky in our first pledge. Will you do me the favor of drinking with me, to the health of our aged and illustrious hostess?"

"Cheerfully. But may I ask, with whom I am drinking?"

"That you will know soon enough; but in the meantime, you will drink with me; here Lenah," added she, turning to a page, "bring me two glasses of Tokay."

The page speedily returned with two goblets full to the brim, on a silver salver, and the princess dropping her handkerchief, her escort stooped to pick it up, which gave her an op-

portunity of mixing the philter with the wine, and the glasses were duly emptied.

The page, when going to the beauffet to replace the goblets, met the countess, who asked him, "to whom he had given the wine?"

"The Tyrolean lady and the Turk."

"When?"

"Just now."

"Did he drink all the wine?"

"To the last drop."

"I think," said the countess to herself, "that the Tyrolean is the Princess Lobkowitz, and yet, I am not certain, but whoever she may be, she loves the prince, and I feel sure was attempting to administer a love potion. I am still free, and if I can, will certainly win Auersperg; one thing is plain to me, whoever she may be, Auersperg is more than smitten, and she evidently delights in his attentions."

"Countess Lingotski, do you remember the duke of Medina Sidonia."

"The duke of Medina Sidonia," repeated the countess, mechanically, in a tone of terror, and had she been unmasked, the spectator would have seen that fear had robbed her lips and cheeks of color, trembling from head to foot, she turned towards the speaker, who wore the armor of a knight of the day of Charlemagne.

"Do I remember the duke of Medina Sidonia," said the duchess, to her unknown monitor. "I shall never forget him, but I beg—"

"Hear me. I am a man of honor, and exert but one simple request, as the price of my silence; name it."

"That you will not molest the Tyrolean and the Turk, nor seek to penetrate their disguises. Should you transgress my positive commands, all Vienna will ring with the fact that."

"Stay," interrupted, the countess, in a voice of agony; "Speak it; do not I conjure you by all that you hold sacred, mention no more; an indiscreet listener, might hear and betray all."

"As I have said before, the secret is safe o long as you obey my instructions, but one word or a single look. Enough, I need say no more. You understand me. Farewell, Countess Lingotski."

The countess bowed, and the knight plunging into the crowd was soon lost, in the mazes of a mazourka.

"Who can this be? Whoever he is, he is the only man in Vienna, who knows my secret?"

The Princess and Auersperg, were seen *whirling round in the national* dance. Conjurers told fortunes and cracked jokes. Some played at cards, and others challenged their neighbors to drink. The Tartar was silent, and answered all who addressed her in monosyllables. She kept her eyes fixed on the princess, was always in speaking distance, and refused all refreshment.

Some men, in the costumes of Indian Princes blazing with jewels, entered the apartment bearing a palanquin, which they put on the floor, and around which they executed sundry dances, and performed many comic tricks.

Baroness Teleki, who was the only one in the rooms in propria personiæ, came up to the palanquin, and asked the occupant to emerge from his concealment, and join the dancers.

"With all pleasure," was the reply in a hoarse voice. "If your ladyship will take a round with me on the floor."

"Willingly. But do not delay too long; as supper will soon be served."

"I am at your ladyship's orders," and the curtains of the palanquin being drawn aside, a complete imitation of the Black Crook stood on the floor."

Not an item had been forgotten, even the cough of the adept, as he leaned on his staff with its curious head, was imitated to the life.

"Baroness, I claim your promise."

"A born Batthiani, and I am a true daughter of that noble house, never forgets her promise."

"Here is my hand?"

"All gathered around this singular pair, the counterfeit Black Crook, paused, panted, and when his adversaries lavished upon him jests and taints, replied by shaking his stick, and apparently trembling with anger."

"Doctor," said one lady, "when shall I marry?"

"When the men have taken leave of their senses."

"You do not flatter."

"You asked me a question, and I was compelled to answer it."

"Well, doctor," said another, habited as Night, in a robe of black velvet, sprinkled with stars, her fair blonde hair confined with a diamond comb, and covered with a rare and costly veil of Brussels lace, "tell me one thing, when shall I marry?"

"That you have not been wooed and won before is not the fault of the opposite sex, as all Vienna well knows that the Princess Windischgratz has refused more good offers than any woman in the city, and not even the darkness of night can conceal her, nor yet

extinguish the sparks that are fluttering around her."

"What will you take for your hump, Black Crook?" asked a young man, as a Spanish cavalier.

"More than you can give."

"What is that?"

"A well balanced mind and a cultivated intellect."

"You are severe."

"No, you, as I told a questioner just now, must hear the truth, and all Vienna knows that the Count Fischer is not celebrated for his intellect. But stay, my lord, I tell you what, there is a rare comedy in the Greek language, written by one Aristophanes, in which a certain cobbler does enact a part—I pray you read it."

"I am almost afraid," asked another, in the robes and ducal coronet of a Doge of Venice, "to beg a specimen of your art."

"Prince Paer need have no fear. His valuable services entitle him to the esteem of his fellow citizens, and he is honorably inscribed in his country's history; the prince has but to ask, and I will reply."

"What is the best remedy for hopeless love?"

"Occupation, and absence from the object who inspires the affection. But I pity the individual who does not correspond to the affection of Prince Paer."

"And what," asked the Tartar, "is the best method of inspiring love?"

"Your question exceeds my art, and I must remain silent."

The Countess Lingotski approached the circle formed around the false Black Crook.

"Beware, countess," said the knight's voice; "if you take my counsel you will be silent."

Second thoughts induced the countess to follow the advice of her military mentor.

Prince Auersperg at last broke the silence, which had lasted some seconds, by asking:

"Shall we have peace or war?"

"I am not politician enough to answer. But whether smiling peace wave her magic wand over the land, or whether Bellona plunge the nation into horrid war, I am sure that, in either case, Prince Charles Auersperg will do his duty—all the world knows that."

"Now, baroness, one more waltz."

The mask and his hostess were soon "the observed of all observers." The semblance of the Black Crook moved apparently in the greatest agony, rapped his stick repeatedly on the floor, and produced shouts of laughter.

"I pray you, knight of the Black Crook, to *resume your conjurations, and tell us something of the future.*"

"You will not be pleased to hear it."

"There you wrong me."

The major domo, habited as a Roman senator, informed his mistress that supper was ready, and, as was the custom in Vienna, all the guests unmasked, and the Black Crook was no less a person than Count Palfi; the Tyrolean disclosed herself as the Princess Lobkowitz; the Turk as Prince Charles Auersperg; the Countess Lingotski, the Tartar, and the unknown knight had disappeared.

The table was spread with the most delicate viands of the season set out in the rarest porcelain; a wild boar was placed at the upper end on a massive silver dish with great state and a flourish of trumpets, a peacock pie with the gorgeous plumage carefully preserved and the head and feet gilt, candied fruits, huge bouquets of flowers, and the wines of France, Spain, and Germany glittering in heavily cut and richly gilded bottles constituted the entertainment. Hilarity was the order of the moment, and the merry company did not separate till the cathedral clock tolled four.

CHAPTER IX.

A MEETING OF THE WITCHES AT THE DEN OF BLACK CROOK.

"How, now, ye secret hags?"

"Witches, in the dark ages, and down to the close of the sixteenth century, exerted a powerful influence over the minds even of the enlightened. All nations had their sorceresses and necromancers. The negroes from the different parts of Africa brought sorcery and magic with them, or, as it was more vulgarly called, obi, and the unhappy being on whom it was put languished and died."—*History of Sorcery.*

The night that the Black Crook had set apart for the reception of the witches at last arrived. The rain fell in torrents, and the streets were comparatively desolate as all who possessed any kind of a shelter remained under cover.

Ursula, Barbara, and a younger companion drove up to the mansion of the Black Crook in a tarnished coach, pulled with difficulty by two starved horses. Dismissing the vehicle, the women thundered at the door, and were soon admitted by the negro, with many grotesque bows and leers.

"Well, you devil's imp," said Ursula, throwing him a broad piece: "the Black Crook has not killed you, yet; but mark me, the day will come, when he'll make short work with you."

The black, grinned knowingly, and pointed to the coin.

"Yes, I understand you; you mean to say, that you have what you like."

The dwarf smiled again, showing a range of unbroken ivories, that a duchess might have envied.

"Tell your master we are here," said Barbara, in a short imperious tone. She was never known to jest or speak to the dwarf, unless when absolute necessity required.

The Black Crook now came in, and invited his guests, after the usual salutations had passed, to enter the room, where a bright fire was blazing; the raven at the sight of the strangers, uttered a dolorous croak, which was immediately followed by an oath.

"Bravo! old boy you have been well taught and don't disgrace the master I serve; well Hertzog what is to be done to-night? Any money?" said Barbara.

"A little!"

"Hear him! A little! I will take an oath, that he has piles of uncounted ducats."

"You are wrong."

"Well, if you say that you have not, let us look at your strong case."

"It is not necessary."

"How much then, will you give us to-night?"

"Not much. I am very poor."

"Poor! with that diamond on his finger; and living in a house like this. I say how much will you give us?"

"One hundred ducats, between the three."

"One hundred ducats! I shall not stay. Come Ursula."

"Well, I will give one hundred and twenty-five ducats."

"That is too little, but it will do better. Now what are we to do?"

"We had better go into the laboratory," said the Black Crook.

"Lead the way;" replied Barbara, haughtily.

This woman, though old and withered, exercised a powerful influence over the Black Crook, who rarely ventured to contradict her.

A large outhouse had been fitted up by the adept; shortly after, he took possession of the mansion as a laboratory; of which he kept the key; this was, except when in actual use, invariably closed, and no one in Vienna, not even Grepo had seen its interior. Issuing the necessary orders to the negro, that he was not to be disturbed, and giving similar commands to Grepo, the Black Crook led the way to the laboratory, and throwing open the door, invited the three witches to enter.

This was a large wide room, paved with squares of alternate white and black marble, with five windows, specially contrived to admit the light, but which were now carefully barred; the ceiling was lofty; a huge furnace ran the whole length of the apartment; a stuffed owl, with glass eyes, on a perch, presented a sepulchral appearance; a set of large shelves, was loaded with retorts and chemical vessels; an immense caldron on four legs was standing in the centre of the apartment; book case, carved in a thousand fantastic forms, filled with books and manuscripts, occupied a remote corner; three singular Flemish pictures, representing the discovery of the philosopher's stone; the transmutation of metals, and the genius of alchemy, ornamented the walls. Some curious arm-chairs, marked with the crest of the elector of Saxony, completed the furniture.

Carefully locking the door, the Black Crook struck a light and kindled a fire, then turning to his companions said, "Now, we shall commence. I have on hand a variety of matters; a young spendthrift, whose uncle is long in dying, and who constantly refuses him cash, wishes the rite of the statue performed. We shall begin, come sisters."

The quartette then joined hands, and executed a grotesque dance to the accompaniment of the rolling thunder, and the pelting rain; this finished a wax figure was laid on the table, the size of a doll, moulded perfectly, representing a decrepit old man, who in spite of his numerous infirmities, still retained a strong hold on life; the youngest witch slowly advanced, and laying her hand on the head, exclaimed in a slow and deliberately measured tone, "Great Lucifer, we invoke thy power, all ye dread deities, who subserve the evil purposes of human nature assist us; murderers, groaning in the abysses of the infernal regions, help us; spirits of evil, whether in the remotest caves of the earth, the boundless air, or under the waves of the green sea, which has submerged so many vessels, and broken so many hearts, assist us now; deities of the pale frozen north, gods of the sunny south, Juggernaut and Mexitli, be with us." Again was the solemn dance performed, and a hymn chanted to the spirits of the air.

"Bring forth the animals, and let us try that before we commence with the dagger," said Barbara; the adept opened a closet, and took out a rabbit, a cock, and a cat, all snow white. Ursula carefully examined the beasts and the bird, to see that they were faultless. Her scrutiny ended, Black Crook clothed himself with a long purple mantle, and the witches put on white cloaks, with heavy crimson fringes. Barbara grasped the cat

firmly by the throat, and feeling for the heart, drove home the dagger, at the same time holding the animal over the chaldron to catch the blood, the carcass was cast in the chimney. Barbara then approached, and after a close examination of the rabbit, drove the dagger in a similar manner to the heart, and likewise cast the remains in the chimney.

The youngest witch then approached the Black Crook, who was seated in a large elbow chair, and thus addressed her.

"Are you, daughter, determined to follow the holy cause of magic?"

"I am."

"Have you duly been made acquainted with the secrets of the mighty order?"

"I have."

"Are you resolved to keep them, happen what will?"

"I will."

"Be you then sworn and admitted as a true daughter of the holy arch society. Daughters embrace your new sister, and carefully examine this bird."

The recently received witch took the cock in her hand, and turning the plumage in every direction, ascertained that there were no black feathers, offering the victim, she exclaimed, "Lucifer, this do I devote to thee, drawing from her girdle a small stiletto, with an exceedingly sharp point, the bird's life was soon ended. Asimilar disposition was made of the carcass with the others."

"The rites of our sacred master Aldeboron, next call for an altar."

"I will erect a shrine," said the Black Crook, "and you sisters will aid me."

Ascending a flight of stairs, he brought down several pieces of wood, which, when joined, formed an altar; the front was painted to represent skulls bound together by a serpent; another pannel an Indian widow burned to death on the funeral pyre of her husband: huge candelabras, composed of small human bones, supported lights of various colors: a skeleton was placed behind the altar, and an iron slab let in; two chains which had bound malefactors to the stake, and a bloody axe, formerly the property of the executioner of Strasburg, which had beheaded the most famous criminals of the age, and for which the Black Crook had paid an enormous price, completed the decorations of this infernal shrine, consecrated to the powers of evil.

The carcasses of the dead animals were then placed on the iron, a match applied, and the apartment was full of the smell of burning flesh.

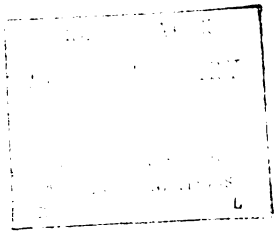
"Bring forth the victim;" and the wax model was placed on a small table near the altar.

"I," said the Black Crook, sticking a pin in the place nearest the heart, "devote thee, soul and body, to the horrors of hell; may the prince of all evil be with thee at all times; may he stifle every inclination to good; may the stings of conscience of that worm that never dies, incesantly torment thee; may the past be a retrospect upon which thou darest not dwell, and the future an abyss, into which thou fearest to plunge; may the devil receive thee thy at last moment, and may the saints and angels fly from thee in terror; nay more, may thy holy guardian angel himself, avert his face, and have no courage to intercede for thee; thus I devote thy head to the infernal powers. As the Black Crook concluded this fearful adjuration, he threw a double handfull of sulphur and frankincense on the charred and smouldering remains.

Ursula next advanced to the altar, sticking a pin nearest the liver, she exclaimed: "Mayest thou be cursed in all the relations of life; if thou hast a wife, may she prove unfaithful, and tear thy bosom with the keenest anguish; if child thou hast, may he wound thee in every possible point, never leave thee a moment's repose or an instant's peace; shouldst thou have a friend, may he too load thee with every agony which the human heart can bear; thus do I devote thee to the flames." Concluding, a handful of some nauseous drug was cast upon the flames, which exhaled the most sickening ordor.

Barbara's turn next came, undoing the fillet on her forehead, she allowed the gray hair to stream in locks over her shoulders, and resting on a cane, with a death's head after a moment's silence, thus addressed the little audience.

"Sisters, and you venerable brother of the grand confraternity, this night we have met to do our master's wish to us, despised as we are, is confided an awful task, and mine be it the dreadful pleasure to continue the sacrifice, which you brother and sisters have begun; our youngest sister will conclude the first part of the rites; sticking a pin in the brain, she thus invoked the powers of evil; "Mayest thou be cursed in every part of thy body; may all thy nerves quiver with agony; mayest thou only exist to suffer, and never know what it is to be free from pain, for a single instant; may the eyes refuse to see, the ears to hear, the tongue to taste, and the hands to feel; may the sinews of the legs be so cramped, that walking is impossible; and mayest thou be in the power of those who will tor-



ment thee unceasingly; may the tendons of the arms be so shrunk, that thou wilt be unable to lift even a cup of water to thy lips; and mayest thou be dependant on those who may refuse thee that trifling boon; thus do I devote thy body to the demon of destruction."

The youngest witch concluded this part of the ceremonies, placing a pin in the upper part of the skull, she exclaimed: "Mayest thou be deprived of reason, that gift which distinguishes man from the animals; mayest thou like the king of old, herd with the beasts of the field; mayest thou be reduced below their level; let not a gleam of reason be vouchsafed thee, no not even in thy last moments; and mayest thou be in the society of those, who will scorn, mock at and deride thee; thus do I devote thee to the tot he gods of malice, hatred and revenge.

The adept then rang a bell, and a modest tap at the door signified that it had been heard. The dwarf stood without in his usual position. Making the customary salutation, he listened deferentially to the orders issued by the Black Crook, and withdrew. A second rap intimated that his master's orders had been executed. The door was opened, and a box stood without, which was brought into the room, and whence the adept took four skulls, cleaned, polished, and mounted in silver. As many bottles of wine were produced and emptied into the fearful vessels, which were first placed for a moment on the altar, and then handed to each of the infernal crew. All then rose, and the Black Crook, with a loud voice, proclaimed:

"By the power vested in me by the Chief of the Confraternity, and as Grand Master for the whole Austrian empire, I do hereby devote to destruction, both of soul and body, the person whom this figure represents! In token f which I and my associates drain these gobets to the dregs."

The wine was then quaffed, the Black Crook resumed his seat, and silence was unbroken for more than an hour.

The Black Crook then arose, and rapidly exchanged his vesture for an unornamented black robe, and the witches their mantles for closely fitting yellow jackets. Each one cast a mineral substance into the cauldron, faggots were heaped to the brim, two spotless pigeons were then slain and thrown on the wood, which was ignited by four matches applied at the corners simultaneously. The Black Crook walked four times round the fire, uttering solemn incantations. The witches did likewise, and the ceremony was concluded by each pouring out a libation of human blood on the smoking pile.

The rites thus ended, the Black Crook entreated the pleasure of the witches company to take some refreshment. Summoning Grepo, he desired him instantly to see that supper was served. The obedient drudge promptly executed the orders, and speedily intimated that the repast was ready. The Black Crook ushered his guests to the banquet with the air of a king feasting his nobles.

Huge joints of meat, in heavy silver dishes, earthen jugs of wine, large plates of fruit, melting in dewy freshness, and the sweet white bread, for which Vienna is so famous, tempted the appetite, and strains of hellish merriment issued from the apartment, each recounting the crimes of which he or she had been the agent, and exulting over the charmed regions in the vicinity of the Hartz mountains, where the demons were the devoted servants of the witches, and delighted in executing their mandates.

Loud claps of thunder repeatedly shook the house, and the rain descended in torrents, but the witches, no wise daunted, continued the recital of their infernal adventures till the dawn of day warned them that it was time to separate

CHAPTER X.

A RAMBLE IN THE COUNTRY.

"Nothing refreshes the weary mind of the citizen so much as a ramble in the country. The mind is dulled by constantly looking at the same objects, conversing with the same people, and seeing the same faces, but a trip to the country freshens us up wonderfully—we catch a glimpse of nature as she is."—*Steele.*

Rodolph Kleinfeldt had wrought long and hard. A copy he had executed of a famous Crucifixion, drawn by Velasquez had greatly increased his reputation, and his constant devotion to his art had made him pale and thin.

A brother artist, who excelled in painting fruit and flowers, one day strolled into his room and bluntly exclaimed:

"Man, you will be ill; if you do not give yourself some rest you will become mad. Come into the country with me."

"I have no time."

"You shall come, or the next thing that I hear will be that you are raving with the brain fever, and in an hospital. But who is that coming up stairs? I hear the sound of a stick."

"Shut the door. It must be the Black Crook."

"The Black Crook?"

"Yes."

"Do you have the honor of numbering him among your patrons?"

"Yes, but shut the door. I do not wish to see him. I began a picture for him which is not yet finished, and every time he comes here he chides me; when I meet him in the street he looks at me reproachfully. There is something withering in his glance. I hear his knock; do not open the door, I beg of you."

The Black Crook rapped, was unable to obtain admission, and went away venting curses on the laziness of the artist.

Partly from fear of meeting the adept, and partly influenced by his friend, Kleinfeldt yielded to his solicitations, and, staff in hand, the artists commenced a pedestrian tour.

The scenery was enchanting; the land was arrayed in the tender green of May, the plants were opening their buds, and the groves were vocal with the songs of the birds.

A modest country hostelry invited the travellers to repose. The best parlor was thrown open, and the hostess pressed them to enter.

Footsore and tired, the weary travellers gladly consented, and ere long were seated at an appetizing repast of chickens stewed with cream, fresh grapes, a huge goat's milk cheese, and some tall bottles of mellowed wine."

"Well," said Kleinfeldt, "this is better than Vienna. Always the same sights, the same eternal round of pleasures, no variety either to please the eye or ear, but every thing here breathes rest and repose; nothing to molest or annoy. Let us sketch to-morrow."

"Landlord?"

Mine host made his appearance; but he deserves at least a full paragraph to himself. Though the Viennese and Austrian nobility are exceedingly haughty; the middle classes are as famed for their simple courtesy, and Franz Lichten, or, as he was commonly called, Uncle Franz by all the boys and girls in the neighborhood, for whom he generally had his pockets full of nuts and apples. He was now in the very prime of life—golden thirty-five—had served in some frontier war, been wounded, received a small pension, and wore the medal of honor. He was always dressed in the costume of the class to which he belonged, but invariably used the finest materials. He had now ruled the Blue Hedgehog for eight years, and justly prided himself on the excellence of his rustic cuisine. He saw at a glance the *frank and kindly disposition* of our artists, and was ready to extend them every facility in his power.

The following day, the friends, after a sound sleep between lavender prepared sheets, departed on their sketching expedition, and, after walking about a mile and a half, reached a spot on which Nature had almost exhausted herself.

A ruined mill, overgrown with ivy and rich scarlet creepers and clematis mixed, occupied the background; four limetrees in full bloom perfumed the air, and swayed gently in the breeze; the ground was carpeted with grass of the richest green, varied with forget-me-nots, anemones, and double larkspur. On the right stood a small brownstone house, built in the taste of a century before, whose front was entirely concealed by red and white roses; a green meadow at the back of the house sloped gently down to a silver stream, cows and sheep feeding quietly completed the charm of the sylvan scene; a small garden filled with the choicest flowers for the accommodation of some bees was attached to the house; "all the air a solemn stillness held," and nothing disturbed the rural quiet which is so fascinating to the denizens of a crowded city. Rodolph and his associate worked for a time in quiet, when the latter exclaimed:

"The place is so quiet that I could wish some one would come for a few moments."

"Don't be so sure, that we shall remain undisturbed master of the field. While you were sketching, I was idle, as I was not near enough to see either the animals or the flowers."

"Let me see, however, what you have done."

"No. It is scarcely worth your scrutiny."

Rodolph insisted, and his friend showed him at length, an exquisitely finished sketch of the rustic flowers at their feet.

"If I could go to the house, or near it, I should see some beautiful things there, that I would like to transfer to canvas."

"Don't be so bashful, man, but take up a little courage, and you will be sure to succeed you certainly are not afraid of any spell;' and he added with a roguish leer: "we have no Black Crook here."

The artist thus adjured, proceeded to the garden, stationed himself outside of the fence, and was soon so engrossed in his task, that he did not heed a footfall, and trembled, when a hand was laid on his shoulder; glancing up he saw a good natured looking old man, who said:

"An artist, I presume?"

"Such is my profession. I hope that I am not intruding on your ground?"

'By no means, I am rather fond of strangers; will not you and your friend yonder, do me the honor of entering my home, and take a glass of such wine as I can offer? You cannot expect the tokay of the capital."

The young man called his friend, and the two soon entered the little domain, which called the old man master."

"Welcome, gentlemen, to the Heart's Repose."

"The Hearts Repose, don't you like the name. One of my ancestors who fought in the war, on the side of the king of Spain, turned his ducats into this little spot, and as he had led rather a rambling life, when he was onee firmly settled, and had taken a spouse to himself, called the little spot Heart's Repose."

"It certainly" replied Rodolph, "does invite to rest."

"And then my daughter is so fond of flowers, that whenever she can find a spot, she is sure to plant something green; but at what are you gazing so earnestly?"

"At this bed of French lilies."

"They are well enough."

"You speak coldly, they present to me, the most magnificent sight that I have ever seen."

In truth the flowers were worthy of the admiration with which the artist regarded them; much care had been expended on the culture of those flowers, mentioned in holy writ; the tall snowy blosssoms raised their proud heads, and exhaling a grateful perfume, seemed to look protectingly down, on the smaller variety, whose snowy bells nestled down to the ground. The sketch books were taken out, and some of the choicest copied.

"Well gentlemen come in, and see what cheer we can offer you. Sophia, Sophia!" a little wrinkled woman came briskly forward.

"What were you pleased to want sir?"

"What have you got in the house that is good to eat. Come, be quiek."

"Well I'll see what I can do;" and the old dame trotted off with an alacrity which greatly belied her years; and Sophia bawled her master, when she had almost got out of hearing—

"Set the table under the lime trees."

The old woman turned back and said, "No master, I shall not set the table there."

"You must, and please Madam Sophia, have the goodness to tell us why you wont."

"Because the last time that the table was set there, some one was stung by the bees, which are for ever in the trees; you know that well enough."

"Faith!" muttered the old man, "she is right; do as you please, Sophia; and you, gentlemen, be pleased to enter."

The lower part of the house, consisted of a small hall, with a parti-colored floor; rustic chairs and sofas, invited the fatigued to rest. The wall was hung with arms of various kinds; among which was a magnificent Turkish scimitar, whose handle was richly set with jewels, and whose blade was stained with blood.

"I see," said their host "that you are looking curiously at that weapon; it was captured by my great-grandfather, Albert Andernach; after whom I am called, from a Turkish officer in a heavy fight, and has descended to me his unworthy grandson, the receiver and bailiff of the most gracious princess dowager Schwartzenberg, who owns most of the land about here, with the exception of this cottage, and that ruined mill; and I would not exchange them for all the gold, in his imperial majesty's treasury. But here is Sophia coming to tell us that the little refreshment I can offer you is ready."

The door of an apartment opening into the hall was thrown open, and the bailiff made his guests enter without further ceremony; like the hall, the floor of this room was also composed of small pieces of parti-colored wood; heavy chairs of Spanish wood; with gay cushions stood in different parts of the room; two silver animals, evidently brought from Mexico or Peru, decorated the mantle-piece; and two Flemish pictures on the walls, completed the decorations. A table stood in the centre, set out with more taste than could have been expected from the old woman's appearance.

Some red apples were piled on a large silver plate, a raised game pie, with an ornamented cover, was the main *piece de resistance;* a bottle of Spanish olives, and a glass dish of exquisitely clear amber-colored honey, with sundry bottles of wine, would have satisfied the most fastidious.

"Well, dame," said Rodolph, addressing Sophia, with a good natured smile; "you have given us food sufficient to tempt an anchorite to break his vows of abstinence; we never see such fruit in Vienna; they tell of the sunbeams, and the long and bright summer days; and then such wine and honey!"

"But," said the master, after looking around; "where is my daughter?"

"Master dear, how should I know? you know as well as I, that M'lle is here one moment, and away the next; she is like a bird flitting from flower to flower. She don't stay long in one place; may be she went to see Father Vincent, she promised to carry him some honey, for his own table; you know that his reverence has a sweet tooth."

"Yes, I know," answered Andernach, impatiently, "but where is my daughter? where is Bettina?"

"Well, perhaps she went to the convent; you know that the abbess, and the nuns are all fond of her, and then they had some embroidery to do, and you know, that she is so skillful with her needle."

"Yes, yes, I know, but do see where Bettina is; I do not like her to be away from home so long; well, gentlemen, it cannot be helped; if we have no hostess; come take what suits you best. But I had forgotten; it is always my custom, when I have guests, to empty two glasses standing; the first to the health of his illustrious imperial majesty, the emperor; God bless him. And the other to the temporal prosperity, and eternal welfare of my respected and esteemed mistress, who is called mother, by all her servants."

"Mother?" interrogated

"Yes, mother, she is the purest and best of women. I know of no one, who is so beloved as the old princess, if sickness or trouble come upon any in the hamlet, she is sure to be there; she is the best of friends and landladies."

"I, willingly," answered Kleinfeldt, "drink to the health of so good a woman; particularly at the instance of one who appreciates her so highly."

The toasts were drunk, and the party in the midst of their enjoyment, when a large wolfhound bounded into the room, and leaping on Andermach, overwhelmed him with caresses.

"Ah," said he, "Bettina cannot be far away, here is her guard; these two, gentlemen, are rarely separated, if Bettina goes to the convent, Leo, will be wretched till he finds out where she is, and if he be separated from her for more than an hour, at a time, he is the most unhappy creature imaginable."

"Leo, where is your mistress?"

The sagacious creature, who was a wolfhound of the purest breed, and coal black, stood in the door, looked down the road and barked.

"You mean that she is coming?"

"Another bark."

"And that you were with her?"

A second bark, and wag of the tail.

"Suppose that you go and tell her, that she is wanted here."

The dog ran rapidly down the road and soon returned with his young mistress. Bettina was just sweet seventeen, and had never been more than ten miles from home, and in her innocent simplicity, never suspected that there could be a wiser man than Father Vincent, the village pastor, who spoke French, as well as German, and whom report added, *even understood Greek, or that any one could be more skilled in all that pertained to house*-keeping than old Sophia. She made the best bread, the lightest conserves, and the finest game pies, for twenty miles round. Nay, did not even the gracious princess herself, when she was going to Vienna, ask the old woman to make her a pie, and said that it was the best she ever tasted. As for the boys of the village, they were well enough, but what were they to her?

Bettina was tall, straight and well made; her complexion was of the purest white, tinged with a faint red; her hair of a pale golden brown, hung in ringlets on her well proportioned neck, and shoulders, except when in a spirit of coquetry, she would confine it with a small gold comb, set with pearls, which excited considerable envy among the rustic belles, as it was the gift of the princess, and was exceedingly beautiful; her hand might have served an artist as a model, it was so small, white, fat, and beautifully dimpled; the nails were almond shaped, with a faint reddish tinge; her short red petticoat, black velvet boddice laced with gold, striped stockings, and a white handkerchief tied round her head, enhanced her charms, and when she advanced to her father, and said she had been detained at the convent, longer than common, Kleinfeldt gazed, as if he never could take his fill.

"Well, my flower," said her father, caressingly; "How can you bear to be away from me so long?"

"So long, papa?"

"Yes, so long. I have not seen you since light this morning."

"I was at the convent, and sister Martha wanted to teach me a certain stitch. So you see I could not get away."

"Why, child, cannot old Sophia teach you all that you need?"

"She is so old-fashioned."

"And what have you to do with the fashions; but in the meantime, we are forgetting the rules of politeness. Permit me to introduce you to two artists, from Vienna, who have kindly consented to partake of our poor hospitality."

"And who," said Kleinfeldt, smiling, have forgotten to tell you their names. Allow me to inform you, that I am Rodolph Kleinfeldt, and my companion, one of the most promising artists in the imperial capital, is Ernest Lederer."

"Gentlemen, you are both welcome."

"Perhaps," said Kleinfeldt, timidly, "Mamselle, would accept a sketch of you, sir; it would be an agreeable recollection of my visit.

"Who? what? I sit for my portrait. I never did such a thing in my life, it is only for

kings, emperors, and nobles, to have their faces taken off, not for such as—

"But, still, papa pleaded Bettina, if the gentleman is willing. I should like to have it."

"Well, you saucy baggage, as you govern the whole village, and sometimes the princess too, I suppose, that I must consent, and a merry smile twinkled in his eye as he spoke, and drawing a chair up to the window, said:

"Here, now take me."

"Kleinfeldt was not slow in profiting by the permission, and a life-like sketch was soon made. While his friend was thus engrossed with his sitter, Lederer had not been idle. Stationed at the other casement, he surveyed the milky mothers of the herd, brought up to yield their treasures; the busy importance of dame Sophia, and the watchful eye of Leo, who seemed endowed with ubiquity, his pencil was equally busy with that of his companion, and he soon produced a spirited representation of the scene, which he handed to his young hostess."

"And is this too for me?"

"And why not; it is but the work of a few moments."

"I can hardly express my thanks, you have all my friends here. Leo, the two cows, dame Sophia, not that I mean any disrespect by naming her after cows and dogs. But it seems so odd to take a dog's picture."

"Oh how rich I am; two pictures, and both in one day. You are both very kind, and I cannot thank you enough."

"You have thanked us both sufficiently," said Lederer.

"And now, farewell, I thank you both, for your hospitality."

"Remember now," said Andernach, "that you have found the way here, and that the door will always be open to you." At the same time gazing kindly on the young men, as they stood before him, who were both so handsome, and yet so different.

"Well, good night," dame Sophia bustled. "Oh, now, be good lads, and see that you don't take cold. I know that your mother's are not here, and I have got you a woollen apiece. You can send them back, by the boy at the Blue Hedgehog; or give them to uncle Franz, and he will take care of them for me.' He and I are old acquaintances, and if you are sick, be sure that you let old Sophia know, and now, good night. Again, don't forget to say your night prayers; Sophia dismissed the artists, and stood looking after them, till they were no longer visible."

"Ten days were thus passed in the most *fascinating manner.* The artists sketched by day, and generally passed their evenings at the brown stone cottage, where they once met Father Vincent, the village priest, who combined a vast amount of scholastic lore, with the most childish simplicity, and utter want of worldly knowledge. At last the painting came, Bettina said little, but looked sad, her father shook both by the hand, and affirmed, that when he next visited Vienna."

"When you will bring Bettina with you."

"Why, she has never been ten miles from home before."

"The greater reason why she should come now."

"Well," said Andernach, "we shall see."

"And now, lads," said Sophia, with her eyes full of tears.

"Are you going to walk to Vienna?"

"We came that way, and we shall beyond all doubt return in the same manner."

"Where do you take your meals?"

"At the different houses of entertainment on the road."

"I thought of that, and put you up a few trifles in a basket." The viands of which dame Sophia spoke thus slightingly, consisted of a large ham, a game pie, with a representation of two chickens fighting on the cover, a cake, a store of biscuits, and a little wine. "So, good bye, and don't forget your night prayers."

Morning broke, and a loud voice was heard inquiring for the two artists. Lederer, who was dressed, presented himself, and recognized Peter, a sort of lad of all work at the cottage, who regarded the two friends at a respectful distance with the most unbounded admiration

"Mistress Sophia sent me," said he, with a rustic bow, "to drive you some thirty miles on your road; she thought that perhaps you would be tired."

"She is very kind, and you also for coming."

Kleinfeldt joined his friend, and they set off in the highest spirits. At parting, both tendered Peter a liberal recompense, which, to their great surprise, was refused.

"Why, Peter," said Lederer, "we cannot allow you to come all this way for nothing."

Peter stammered, and at last, with considerable hesitation, said:

"Paint me a little picture."

"Of whom?"

"Of Leo and the old cow. But, then, we shall never see you again."

"Wait till next summer, or perhaps even before. But where shall we send the picture?"

"To my cousin, a saddler, who lives in a small street near the cathedral," replied he

lad, producing a soiled piece of paper with a number of hieroglyphics, which, after some difficulty, were deciphered.

"I shall not fall, Peter," said Lederer.

Leo, who had accompanied Peter as a guard of honor, wagged his tail, and looked wistfully after the departing figures of the friends till they were lost to sight. When in company with Peter, who looked exceedingly lacrymose, he returned to the brown cottage, but moped the rest of the day, which induced Dame Sophia to say that she really believed that the beast was grieving like any Christian after the two young artists from Vienna.

The friends pursued their way in silence. Each seemed desirous of speaking, yet each was desirous of giving his companion the precedence. At last Lederer said:

"Well, Kleinfeldt, what do you think of our new friends?"

"Think of our new friends? Why Andernach is a whole-souled, good-hearted man; Uncle Franz, one of the best fellows between this and Vienna, if not the very best; Dame Sophia was like a mother to us; Leo always wagged his tail, and Peter, with great saucer eyes, was ready to fall down and worship us."

"All very well, and I could not paint them better myself, but you say nothing about the fairest flower of all."

"Who?"

"Stupid! Can't you guess?"

"You know."

"I insist upon it that you tell me."

"Why, the pride of the village, the peerless Bettina."

"Bettina?"

"Yes, Bettina, and you well know, Rodolph, that you have lost your heart in that quarter. Yes, and unless I am exceedingly mistaken, you have taken M'lle. Bettina's in exchange. You remember the old proverb, 'a fair exchange is no robbery.'"

"You are jesting, Ernest. On what do you found your ideas?"

"From the fact that, when she parted with me, she tendered her cheek and pressed my hand; but she took leave of you with downcast look and averted eyes. I am sure that she loves you."

"We shall be able to tell as time progresses."

At noon they stopped to obtain some refreshment and rest for a few hours, where a lumbering coach, with the mares then commonly used, stood before the door, and, on entering the common room, they were surprised at young Palfi, who coldly said:

"I trust I have the honor of seeing the artist Kleinfeldt in perfect health?"

"I am enjoying my usual health; your lordship is, I see, about taking a pleasure trip."

"Yes, I propose passing a few days at the Blue Hedgehog, at a little distance from here."

"Farewell my lord," was Kleinfeldt's sole reply, and he felt disturbed, he knew not why.

And was the count much better satisfied with his interview than the artist, insolent hound, as if he a mere painter, who is compelled to toil, should treat me in that way: and yet the whole thing is so cool, his manner so perfectly respectful that I dare not complain, if he were addressing a king, he could not be more deferental, I cannot quarrel with him, he galls me to the very quick, and yet I cannot resent it; well I will think of him no more, but let destiny shape my course as it will; I am tired of Vienna, and sated with its pleasures, a little rest and refreshment, will be of the greatest service to me.

Thus spoke a man, whom fortune had crowned with her choicest favors, but who was now a prey to the keenest *ennui*.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BOUDOIR OF THE COUNTESS LINGOTSKI.

My Lady. "She is so angry, that she has much ado to control her temper, within reasonable bounds."

Duchess. "Perhaps you are wrong."

Waiting Gentlewoman. No. I have just left her, and she is transported with rage."—*Duchess of Burgundy.*

The masquerade had been a scene of the most bitter mortification to the Countess Lingotski, naturally haughty and impatient of control, she could scarcely restrain herself till she got home, and when safe in her boudoir divested herself of her masquerade attire, trampled her mask under foot, impatiently tore off her jewels, and throwing herself on a couch, remained there till noon of the following day. The violence of the first attack of jealousy had subsided a little, and she now began to devise plans for the future, how she should secure the prince, mortify the princess, and above all, detect the incognita.

Full of these thoughts, she determined to take a drive and summoned her Abigail, to aid her in her toilet; the adroit girl was rather a favorite with her mistress, but the countess was now taciturn, and but little disposed to converse. At twelve o'clock the countess was in

the public square, clad in all the elegance that a fashionable modiste of two centuries ago, could produce.

All the young men of the imperial city, who belonged to the *creme, de la creme*, crowded round the carriage, and the countess apparently was never in a better humor, or a gayer mood; but she completely verified the old proverb, that appearances are often deceitful; the countess was miserable; she eagerly desired to see Prince Charles Auersperg; attract him to her side, by some artifice, and then exhibit her captive, to the Princess; but both those parties were absent, and she was compelled to listen, with an aching heart, to the vapid flatteries, and insipid nothings of a half a dozen coxcombs, who fluttered around her, and scarcely left her a moment's repose.

Wearied by what was passing, the countess directed her coachman to drive home.

On her arrival at the palace, the countess at once commanded the porter to admit no visitors, and repairing to her chamber, said to her maid who was executing some fancy work.

"Any one been here, Lizette?"

"No, my lady, I have been alone. I looked out of the window, and saw the Black Crook."

"The Black Crook?"

"Who do you mean?"

"Well, my lady, this is a great doctor and magician, who can interpret the future."

"What nonsense," said the countess, in a tone, which plainly encouraged the maid to proceed.

"He lives in that old House, belonging to Prince Esterhazy, which was so long empty. With a hideous, tongueless negro dwarf, and a half starved boy who does the work of the house."

"And what can this quack do."

"Every thing in the world, my lady, if he chooses. He can turn love to hate, or hate to love. He can do whatever he will."

"Do you know any one, that has consulted him?"

"I have heard of several. But I cannot say that I know any one."

"You may go now. I shall not require your services any more to-day."

"The countess pondered well what her servant had said. The free inquiry which was to culminate in the French and American revolutions, which was entirely to change the political status of every nation, had just begun. The newspaper, the great vehicle of the civilized world, which has wrought such wonderous changes, had scarcely commenced. A belief in witchcraft, though discouraged, still *existed, and some of* the keenest intellects were accustomed to rely on the dicta of witches and fortune tellers; true the law in all parts of civilized Europe, was exceedingly severe against these imposters. But it is not the less true, that they nevertheless exercised their vocation, and profited largely by the superstition of their duties."

The countess at last came to the resolution that she would secretly request the Black Crook, to grant her a private interview, and after some moments of deep thought penned the following note:

"The fame of Doctor Hertzog, has been long known to the writer, and she desires a strictly private interview at her own residence: Will the doctor, should be feel disposed to grant the request, signify as much to the bearer?"

Clothing herself in a dark cloak, and veiled from head to foot, the countess proceeded to the neighborhood of the empiric, and soon reached his house. A shabbly clad boy, who was lingering in the vicinity, was induced by a little silver to present the note in person. And after what seemed to the countess a very considerable delay, she received the following reply:

"Dr. Hertzog informs his correspondent, that he has long since declined visiting, and that those who wish to inquire of the Fates through him, must call at his mansion."

This empiric, thought the countess, at least, places a high value on himself, and I suppose that I must yield to his wishes. Glancing nervously round to see that she was unobserved, the countess gave the usual customary tap, and was at once admitted by the negro into the apartment, into which we have already introduced our readers, where the Black Crook was seated at a table covered with a variety of magical implements.

"I presume," said the countess, that I have the honor of addressing the famous Doctor Hertzog."

The Black Crook rose as his visitor entered. The room was lighted with two wax tapers in silver stands; and the shabby attire of the day was exchanged for a magnificent dressing-gown, of black velvet, faced with ermine, the sleeves of this garment which were exceedingly ample, were lined with crimson silk, and embroidered in seed pearl, a sash of red silk, with gold tassels cinctured his waist, a gold chain, from which was suspended a glittering diamond star, was his sole ornament.

The countess was amazed; could this princely looking personage, (as the darkness concealed his hump,) be indeed the Black Crook, of whom she had heard such fearful reports?

Could the individual before her, who accosted her with the haughty, though dignified courtesy of a Spanish grandee, be in truth the dreaded magician? And the Countess Lingotski, though a woman of the world, and well versed in diplomacy, was bewildered, and at a loss how to act.

Promply recovering herself, the countess slightly bowing accepted a chair placed at her disposal, and waited for the Black Crook who th us addressed her:

"You would, I understand, lady, consult the Fates through me?"

"I would."

"You will then place in me the most entire and unreserved confidence; may I ask in what way you are pleased to need my poorservices?"

The countess blushed, hesitated, and as the Black Crook knew perfectly what was passing in her mind he said in an interrogative tone:

"You love?"

A faint "yes," was the sole reply.

"But does the object of your affection reciprocate your love?"

A faint "no," was the answer:

"And you would fain win his affections?"

"I would cross the ocean, brave the terrors of the frozen north, or even the dangers of hell itself."

"Does he love another?"

"I cannot tell."

"Does another love him?"

"I am sure of it.

"Dark or fair?"

"Fair."

The adept mused for a moment, and thought that his services had already been put in requisition against this very party, but not being sure of the fact, and tempted by a heavy purse, in the hand of the countess, replied:

"I will serve you as far as my art will go."

"I will not stint you, as to price," resumed the countess, "accomplish my desires, and any sum you think proper to demand shall be yours,"

The adept bowed and asked, "will you try the elements? And shall I compound a philter?"

"Proceed in any manner that you see fit."

The Black Crook summoning the dwarf, delivered some instructions in an unknown language, and substituted for the dressing-gown a rich mantle of the cloth of silver, with heavy bullion fringes, and superbly wrought with needle work; representing scenes from classic story; a zone or girdle of precious stones, clasped with a matchless sapphire, confined this garment at the waist; an antique diadem *of silver and emeralds, rested* on his brow, and *his hand grasped a small* but exquisitely chased silver staff, whose head bore the mystic opal, engraved with Hebrew characters; his appearance thus vested, was imposing and splendid; and he resembled a high priest about to offer a sacrifice.

The black entered, bearing a richly carved wooden easket, which he placed on the floor, and, at a sign from his master, wheeled a table with a cloth, which he placed before the adept, and silently withdrew. The Black Crook raised the cloth disclosing a marble slab richly painted, representing the four seasons. Four large yellow marble vases of the Egyptian shape and finished workmanship were placed at each corner of the table, and twelve wax tapers, each of a different color, lighted.

These preparations made, the Black Crook said in a low but perfectly distinct voice,

"Should you wish to retire, the rite is imperfect."

"No; be the consequences what they may, I shall proceed."

The Black Crook bowed assent, and placing three packets of earth, each of different shades, on the table, in a clear and musical voice, invoked the element of earth:

"Oh earth, our common mother, who supportest us during the brief span vouchsafed to us here below, who sustainest us while we live, who presentest to us fruits for our sustenance and flowers for our pleasure, who, when our mortal career is finished, piously receivest us, be propitious, oh mother, command that all the spirits enclosed in thy bosom shall aid, comfort, and assist us."

As he spoke these last words, he waved his wand thrice, and the room was in utter darkness. Still his voice was heard in a low, solemn, measured chant, the wand was again waved thrice, and the apartment was lighted.

Carefully scrutinizing the earth, a portion was set aside, and another taken from the casket occupied its place. Ringing the bell, the dwarf entered the room, and, bowing, awaited his commands. A few words were uttered in the dialect he had before used, and two small gold cruets, in the shape of antique vases, were held by the negro, who had changed his usual attire for a closely fitting suit of cloth of gold, with an ample cloak trailing on the ground, and emblazoned with the sun. The Black Crook carefully unsealed the cruets, and, after smelling their contents, poured a small quantity from each into a gol den pitcher held by the negro, to which he added a minute portion from a small silver phial which he took from his bosom.

Ten times did he make the turn of the tables, and the negro after each incantation bowed

bow, and thrice extended his hands. The adept finally approached the table and exclaimed in a loud voice, "fire descend." In a moment, the earth blazed, and the apartment was filled with a sulphur perfume. The Black Crook made an almost imperceptible sign, and the negro disappeared.

"Lady, I have prepared the elixir," and as he spoke he pointed to the gold vessel. "Sixty ducats is the price, administer this, and your success is certain."

The countess smelled and tasted the elixir, which was inodorous and insipid. The adept, clad in his official robes, still stood before her, and, by a courteous inclination of the head, intimated that the audience was at an end.

"But the directions," said the countess.

"Put it in any liquid thing, but beware of a priest's benediction. Sould this touch any sacred thing, its power is gone forever, and not all my art can aid you. Farewell."

Twelve o'clock rang out from the great tower of the cathedral, and the countess, unused to be abroad at that late hour, passed rapidly along, but ere she had proceeded twenty steps, a voice exclaimed:

"Lady, cross my hand with silver, and I will tell you your fate."

The speaker was a tall, gaunt gipsey, who had seen nearly seventy summers. Beauty had long since departed. Her complexion was sallow, and indicated disease; teeth she had none; and her attire consisted of a dingy wrapper and the remains of a woollen cloak.

At another time, the countess would have thrown the wretched petitioner a trifle, and thought no more about it, but now she was in a superstitious mood, and a prey to desponding emotions. Drawing the hag aside, a small silver coin was placed in her hand, and the sybil continued:

"You will not be happy. I can say no more."

"But surely your art will go further; pray look again, and I will cross your palm with silver a second time."

"It is not the custom of our tribe, lady, to try the stars again, for the same person, till the moon wanes; and drawing herself up with considerable dignity, the crone added:

"I will not do it."

Abashed by the manner, and more terrified than she chose to admit, the countess hastily wended her way homeward; and rapping at the gate, demanded admission.

"Who is there?" Asked the porter in a gruff voice.

"It is I."

"And who is I."

"*Your mistress, you well knew that Jane,* my former maid was ill, and I went to see her; admit me at once."

The porter sulkily descending from his large chair, threw open the gates, and the countess acknowledging his civility, with a slight inclination of the head, gained her chamber, where we shall leave her to meditate at leisure on the events of the night.

CHAPTER XII.

COUNT PALFI AT THE BLUE HEDGEHOG.

When a nobleman suitably attended, rides up to one of these hostelries, what a work and fuss do we see; the landlord is all smiles, the landlady all courtesies, the waiters all obsequiousness, and nothing is too good.—*Quevedo.*

The count left Vienna, not because ill luck had gone against him; he did not then know the meaning of the word; not because any of the fair ladies of the imperial court had refused their smiles, all were too eager to catch the young and handsome nobleman, with his town house, and country house, broad land, bright gold and countless diamonds; not because he was unlucky at play, he rarely gambled; but a whim had seized him; he would go in the country for a season; he would see how he could support such a monotonous abode; he would at least have the benefit of novelty.

He therefore summoned his majodomo, and signified that it was his will and pleasure, that the carriage should should be got ready, and that the valet be informed that the Count Palfi designed visiting the country.

"We will set out to-morrow."

The steward who understood his lord, perfectly, knew that it would be useless, and only said:

"Your wishes shall be speedily executed."

The heavy coach was then fitted up, a delicate luncheon prepared, and the pockets stuffed with perfumes, books and wine; thus equipped, and fortified against the attacks of an enemy, which began seriously to annoy him, the count started, having previously ordered that some saddle horses should accompany him; that when tired of the monotony of the coach, he could exchange it for the easy paces of a well trained steed, and arrived at the Blue Hedgehog, shortly after the artists had departed.

The landlady had never entertained a guest of such quality before, and was unwearied in her attentions; the table was daily spread

with the most appetising fare, and uncle Franz, opened some bottles which had remained, as he was wont to remark, in the cellar, since the time of his father; honest man, God rest his soul. The valet was the admiration of all the villiage belles, and the envy of the men, who cast the most malicious glances at the favored individual, as he strutted consequentially through the village.

The count meanwhile enjoyed himself vast-, while the country had the charm of novty, and had not as yet been attacked by that rell demon, which too frequently is an unwelcome guest at the tables of the rich. He rode, walked and occasionally read a few pages, from some of the romances he had brought with him from Vienna.

"Chance one evening threw him into conversation with Andernach, who occasionally passed an evening at the Blue Hedgehog; the novel was stupid. Palfi was bored, and if he only had some one to play cards with him. Uncle Franz, deferentially answered, that perhaps the Herr Baliff would suit his lordship, that he was reckoned an excellent hand, at all games of cards."

"Show him up," said the count, delighted to have a compsnion. Andernach entered, was introduced to Palfi's great surprise. The evening passed quickly, and he accepted an invitation, to hunt on the third day after, and partake of a rural breakfast."

The time arrived, and the count was faithful to the appointment. Dame Sophia had exerted her best culinary skill, and added greatly to her reputation; all kinds of game produced on the estate; fruits preserved in the finest sugar, so dainty in their appearance that fairies might have prepared, and queens eaten them; raised game pies, with ornamented lids. Sweet cakes of different kinds, piles of grapes, figs, and apples; and wine, which as Andernach observed, the emperor himself had frequently drank worse, tempted the guests, and the Bailiff was profuse to all, in his invitations, to eat heartily of the best, that was set before them.

Bettina did the honors, assisted by Dame Sophia, and the count frequently glanced at the rustic beauty, and thought how many of the court ladies would gladly exchange their gems for the smooth rosy cheeks, bright eyes and elastic motions of the little country girl, who thought that the Princess Schwarzenberg, the owner of the estate, was the finest lady she had ever seen, and who, when she had a new suit of ribbons, considered herself the happiest person in the village. Palfi cast many glances at Bettina, *which were not unnoticed by* Dame Sophia, who cherished sundry ideas of preferment, and that her darling might, if she would only be a reasonable girl, and think no more of that poor artist, be one of the first ladies in Vienna.

Bettina, indeed, thought that the count was a very fine gentleman. He dressed more handsomely, than any one she had ever seen before, but that was all, he could neither draw or paint like Kleinfeldt, nor sing and dance like Lederer. He looked at her too hard, and she did not like that. Ennui was completely banished; the count had some object in view, and for the first time threw himself into it heart and soul. He sent to Vienna for some arms, and begged Andernach acceptance of the best, was unwearied in his attendance at all the shooting parties, affected great interest in the different varieties of game. He won Dame Sophia's heart, by a present of a sett of Mechlin lace ruffles, which he had long thrown aside, because they were out of fashion. And sometimes, when the weather permitted, or when he was not answering the letters of his Vienna correspondent, passed an evening at the brown stone cottage, where he attentively listened to the Bailiff's long stories of how many heads of game he had bagged last season. How many cabbages he wished to plant this, how the tenants were careless about paying their rents, and sundry other matters equally interesting to a young nobleman in one of the gayest cities of the world. And yet Andernach in the simplicity of his heart, never suspected that there might be some object in view, which was kept in the back ground."

Meanwhile, how fared it with Kleinfeldt. The friends returned to Vienna, and though Lederer felt somewhat uncomfortable at first, he resolutely addressed himself to his work, and soon drove out all thoughts of love; what was such a foolish thing to him; his friend was not so fortunate; if he took up his pencil, thoughts of Bettina presented themselves, if he handled his brush, the question suggested itself, where is Bettina now, and what is she doing; if he saw a flower as he passed through the market, he imagined his pretty mistress bending over her beds, tying up her flowers, weeding and watering; pshaw! this wont do, was his mental ejaculation, and then that confounded Black Crook, who tormented him two and three times a week, it could not be borne, and Kleinfeldt really persuaded himself that he was sick, and needed a change of air and scene; guided by this view of the matter, the artist hied him to an experienced dealer in horses, and without acquainting any one with his intention hired a hand-

some grey, and started out; in proportion as he left the city, his spirits revived; he eat the simple fare placed before him, with the greatest appetite, and as he said was really improving; these favorable symptoms increased, and he felt perfetly well, when he dismounted at the horse block of the Blue Hedgehog,—and throwing his bridle to the lame hostler, with a bit of silver, requested him to take the greatest care of his steed. The count felt that he had not prospered in his wooing. Wherever he visited the brown cottage Dame, Sophia, usually appeared, regretted that the bailiff had just gone out, perhaps he would return soon, she could not tell.

Where then was the Fraulein; oh, the Fraulein was everywhere, and nowhere long; ten minutes in one spot, and ten minutes in another, it was hard to say where she was; would his lordship be pleased to be seated, and she would go out after the Herr Andernach.

The count was dissatisfied, yet he could not complain; at last he determined to settle the matter definitely, one way or the other, and came to this resolution the very evening that Kleinfeldt arrived, and went to visit the bailiff. Fortune had at last found him, as he opened the gate, he saw the fraulein in the garden.

"Ah, M'lle, at last I have the pleasure of seeing you," said the count with a ceremonious bow.

"I frequently go out," was the chilling answer.

"But a little variety, is occasionally of service; what would you think of a town life?"

"A town life!"

"Yes, imagine yourself mistress of a large and magnificent mansion in the most fashionable part of the city, with a train of liveried servants to wait upon you, and a lady's maid always at your command, and then to think of the dresses, the silks of India, shawls from the East, and the hosts of gems with which the goldsmiths like to dazzle their customers."

"These things are all very attractive my lord," replied Bettina, who though she had been bred in the utmost seclusion, still had that love of finery, which is almost inherent in every woman's breast; and yet, to do her justice, she would rather have lived with Kleinfeldt in a hut, than with Palfi in all the splendor with which he endeavored to entice her.

"I trust that you will find them so, and to think of the amusements, the fairs, the wild beast shows, the balls, masquerades, and *ridottos; and then as you* are so fond of flowers, you can have them, if you see fit, all the year round. Imagine a large elegant apartment, filled with flowers and tropical birds, when the ground is covered with snow, and the people are shivering with cold."

"I should be thinking," replied Bettina "of the poor, who can scarcely afford fire and food."

"The poor. You have nothing to do with them."

"Pardon me, my lord, there you are mistaken. Our good priest said the other Sunday that the rich were bound to give somewhat of their substance to the poor, and that Jesus Christ commanded it."

"The village priest! Let him mind his own business, and read his breviary! I am fully competent to attend to my own matters. In a word, Bettina, will you be the Countess Palfi?"

"No, my lord, I will not."

The young noble was nettled. It was the first time in his life that he had met so blunt a refusal, and he could not understand how a simple village maiden could overlook so many and such great advantages. For be it known, gentle reader, the Germans and English are two nations in Europe who pay the greatest devotion to rank and wealth, and the writer well remembers an instance which occurred in the United States: A German, of a long pedigree but a short rent-roll, came to this country. He had nothing left but an empty title. For a time this landless lord enjoyed the hospitality of a religious community, and ultimately fastened himself on Dr. Kenrick, then Roman Catholic Bishop of Philadelphia. A number of the poorer class of his countrymen who imagined that, because he was a baron, he was all powerful, came to see him in quest of aid, little imagining that the person whose hand they so eagerly kissed, was as poor as themselves and then living on charity. And these individuals were treated as though they were slaves and he their lord.

To be refused was bad enough, but to have his rank and title slighted, and all his offers spurned, was rather more than the young noble could bear patiently, and he demanded rather petulantly,

"May I ask the reason?"

"My lord," responded Bettina, with a reserved dignity, which only enhanced her charms in the eyes of her admirer, "you have no right to ask that question."

"You will pardon me. I trust that you will give me a reason why you reject such an advantageous offer."

"I love another."

"And that other is—"

"There I shall be silent."

"By heavens," said Palfi, "you shall be mine!" And as he spoke he threw his arms around Bettina and pressed her to his bosom, passionately exclaiming, "you shall be mine—no one else shall possess these transcendant charms!"

"My lord," said Bettina, in a tone of excessive fright and vexation, "you forget that I am a woman, alone and unprotected, I therefore beseech that you will unhand me."

"I again ask, will you be mine?"

"Never!"

"And is there no one near to aid me?" exclaimed Bettina, casting a hopeless glance at the cottage, as she well knew that her father and Dame Sophia were at a distance."

"Yes!" exclaimed Kleinfeldt, rushing up, "I am here, and will defend you to the last drop of my blood. My lord, at once desist from this brutal and unmanly persecution. I will compel you, even at the risk of my life!"

"And who are you that presumes to interfere between a noble and the object of his preference—a base born churl."

"I will tell you, my lord. I am a man, created by the same God who formed you, and equally with yourself redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I am a painter, it is true, and it is also an undisputed fact that I cannot boast a long line of titled ancestors, but you shall not, when I am present, insult any female, much less the woman that I love."

"Were you my equal," replied the count, "I should instantly demand the satisfaction that is customary."

"That poor subterfuge shall not avail you. You have no right to insult a man, and then refese him satisfaction."

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Bettina, "I beg, I implore, that you will carry the matter no further."

"It is impossible," replied Rodolph. "The count has grossly insulted both you and myself, and I should feel that I were lacking in spirit if I allowed it to pass unnoticed. My lord, measure this weapon with your own—I will not take you at a disadvantage."

The count carelessly measured the sword extended to him, and the adversaries withdrew a little distance from Bettina, who, wringing her hands, and invoking the assistance of all the saints, anxiously awaited the issue of the contest.

The antagonists were well matched. Both young, of the same size, and well practised in the weapon they had chosen, but Rodolph had the advantage of a more vigorous constitution, and his health had not been impaired by late hours, dissipation, and luxurious living. At first the count returned every thrust with interest, and he fought with a desperation worthy of a better cause; hatred to Kleinfeldt and intense disappointment had nerved his arm with more than its usual vigor, and lent him a kind of supernatural strength, but that fictitious power soon failed him; while the artist was as fresh and eager as when the duel commenced, and skilfully parried every thrust of his antagonist. This sorely mortified the count, who felt that his strength was failing. A well aimed thrust took effect, and Palfi sank, faint and bleeding, on the sward, the vital fluid oozing from every pore.

Kleinfeldt flew to his relief, and in an agony of grief exclaimed:

"Are you wounded mortally?"

"No," said the count, his better feelings returning. He would have said more, but again relapsed into unconsciousness.

Bettina, who, though alarmed at the count's condition, did not lose her presence of mind, ran for some water, linen, and vegetable simples. The count's wounds were soon staunched, and Kleinfeldt, enlisting the services of a peasant, who chanced to be employed in a neighboring field, and who aided in constructing a litter and bearing the sufferer to the Blue Hedgehog, where he was soon put to bed and the village Æsculapius summoned, who, after a minute inspection of his patient, declared that he would do well enough, but prescribed for the present rest, and the most absolute quiet, interdicting the entrance to the sick chamber to every one but the landlady and the old major domo. Palfi, however, promised the mistress of the Blue Hedgehog a handsome gratuity if she would be silent, and the physician a double fee if he would be equally cautious. Swayed by these weighty considerations, and influenced by the rank and title of the patient, both these personages agreed to act as the count desired, and even the chambermaid did not know what had happened, as her mistress told her that the count was very sick, and that he must on no account be disturbed, and further added that he had ordered this piece of gold to be given her to purchase some ribbons. Satisfied with the count's liberality, and understanding perfectly what was meant, the girl gave a broad grin, pocketed the gold piece, knowingly, and wisely held her tongue. Kleinfeldt returned to Vienna, the valet daily drove out in the coach, and was the envy of all the rustic gallants and the admiration of all the beauties.

Ten days had thus elapsed, when the painter was surprised by the sudden apparition of the count's major domo in his painting room, who, bowing courteously, said:

"My master has desired me, most worshipful sir, to beg that you will honor him with your presence, without any further delay, at the Blue Hedgehog, and bring with you the finest dress that you have; on this point, my lord was particularly anxious."

"But how am I to go?"

"I have already provided for that, be so kind as to come to the residence of the Count Palfi, in about an hour, and you will find all prepared for your departure."

"I shall not fail to attend you, but what an his lordship want of me."

The steward bowed, und casting his eyes around the apartment, asked the price of a remarkably well finished picture of "Hebe, feeding Jupiter."

"Five hundred golden ducats."

"It is now, my lord's," said the major domo, as he handed the painter a draught on a banker; and with another profound bow took his departure.

At the appointed hour, the painter rang at the door of the Count Palfi's palace, and was admitted by a page, who showed by his deferential manner, that the artist was expected, and that when he arrived, he must be treated as an honored guest. Ushering Kleinfeldt in the reception room, he pushed a chair forward, and requested the artist to be seated, till the majo domo who was hourly expected, should return.

In a few moments that functionary entered, and invited Kleinfeldt to partake of some refreshment before he commenced his journey, led the way to the dining room, and prayed the artist to be seated.

This apartment was furnished as sumptuously as the reception room, but in a different style. The ceiling was painted in a fresco, representing flowers; the furniture was dark, and good copies after the antique, in alabaster, ornamented the walls on brackets.

A cold collation stood on a table, in the centre of the room, and two footmen, out of livery, offered the choicest vintages.

A few moments sufficed the artist, he was too anxious to commence his journey, and see the end of this mysterious adventure, to linger long at the table; and intimating to the majo domo, that he was anxious to start; the latter assented; and opening the front door, signified to Kleinfeldt, to enter the coach, standing at the main entrance. The whip was cracked, the postillion chirped to the mares, and these last set off at a round gallop. Proceeding thus rapidly, with a short interval, to rest the mares, Kleinfeldt arrived at the Blue Hedgehog, and was warmly received by uncle Franz, and the rest of the household. Supper offered, and as the artist was rather tired with his journey, he was considerately allowed to rest.

A tap at the door the next day, aroused him from his slumbers, and he asked who was there.

"My lord," said the major domo, "requests that attired in the suit you brought with you, you will visit him in the large bed room, at noon; meantime breakfast will be served. I had nearly forgotten to tell you, that the count begs that you will not go near the brown cottage."

Wondering what all this could mean, the painter yielded assent; and after the fruit, bread, wine, and stewed chicken had been duly discussed, Kleinfeldt entered on the duties of the toilet, and when dressed, was the beau ideal of an artist of that period; a doublet and trunks of dark purple velvet, richly laced with gold, falling ruffles and cuffs, of the finest point, silk stockings and high toed shoes, set off his manly graces; having still some time to spare, Kleinfeldt prepared his brushes, (without which he never traveled,) and commenced a little fancy sketch, with the intention of presenting it, when finished, to the count.

Time passed quickly while engaged in his favorite art, and precisely as the village clock struck twelve, Count Mardhoff entered the apartment, attired in a white suit of the same cut as that worn by the artist, and requested th epleasure of escorting him to the chamber.

Still more amazed the artist could only assent, and mounting to the apartment occupied by the count was gratified to see him seated in a large arm chair, also clad in white.

"Sir, artist" said the count. "I committed the egregious blunder of attempting to woo a lady, who had already given her heart to another. And was still more foolish in attempting to force her inclination, sickness has cured me of my love fit, and, I thought I could not do better, than inducing her father to give her to one who I know will protect and cherish her, and thus repair my error in a degree. "Ho, there," said he, slightly raising his voice, bring in the bride."

The mistress of the Blue Hedgehog, and Dame Sophia, clad in their bravest attire, and holding immense bouquets of white flowers, ushered in the bride elect with considerable pomp. Bettina wore a dress of the finest white Indian silk, richly trimmed with lace, which had the true yellow tint, so invaluable to connoiseurs. Her hair was confined with the much valued comb of the gracious princess; and a pearl bracelet, the wedding gift of the same lady, encircled her

right arm. A wreath of white roses, showed that she would soon plight her troth at the altar, (white roses are never worn by wives or widows in Austria.) The count saluted the bride elect, with a respectful bow. And taking a case from the table before him, said:

"Dame Sophia, you will act as my proxy, and clasp this necklace around the fraulein's neck."

Sundry exclamations of admiration were exchanged between the two elderly ladies, as they officiated as the waiting women of the youthful Bettina; and the jewel well deserved the encomiums lavished upon it. It was composed of the finest opals, set in native gold, intermixed with garnets, and clasped with a fine topaz.

"Remember, Fraulein," said the count, "that whenever you are in trouble and need any assistance, Palfi is your friend, and now let's to church."

The procession set out in the following order: Count Palfi leading the bride elect; Count Mardhoff, Dame Sophia; the artist, the mistress of the Blue Hedgehog, and the maid escorted by the count's valet, closed the party from the inn.

Little girls in white awaited their arrival at the church yard, and strewed the way with roses and violets; the little chapel, which dated from a very remote period, was of the purest gothic architecture, was profusely ornamented with greens; the altar was decked with flowers, and blazing with wax lights. The bailiff clad in his best, and decorated with his medal, bowing, received the bride from the hands of Count Palfi, and Dame Sophia then threw over her a long white veil.

Father Vincent stood in his surplice and stole at the rails of the sanctuary; the ceremony was soon performed, and the Fraulein Bettina converted into the wife of the artist, Kleinfeldt: honest Peter dressed in a new suit, from top to toe, the gift of the count, to which Dame Sophia added some ribbons, with the injunction, "don't stare like a fool," gazed on the whole proceedings with the most unfeigned delight, and critical admiration.

The knot having been tied, the whole party, including all the bride's young companions, repaired to the brown cottage, where a bridal feast had been prepared at the cost, and by the orders of Count Palfi.

Dame Sophia, aided by the count's valet, set out the table with considerable taste; flowers and greens ornamented the room, a large cake, decorated with orange blossoms "from the count's own conservatory," observed *Dame Sophia*, with the greates, pride graced the centre of the table, sparkling bottles of wine of almost every color in the rainbow, except green, were placed wherever they could stand. Huge dishes of ham, beef, and cold turkeys, graced the upper end of the board, and fruits, the lower. The count himself led Dame Sophia, to the seat of honor, and modestly standing in the back ground, insisted that Andernach should take the other. Father Vincent asked a blessing, then commenced a tremendous onslaught on the viands. Turkeys, beef, and hams, speedily disappeared; the sweets did not maintain their position much longer, and it was a difficult matter to say which moved the fastest, tongues or teeth. The health of the bride and bridegroom was drunk, Count Palfi, pleading indisposition retired soon, leaving Count Mardhoff, as his representative, to open the ball; the dancing which commenced soon after the banquet, was kept up to what was then considered a late hour, and the guests separated well satisfied at ten o'clock.

The reader will doubtless be surprised at this sudden change in Count Palfi's views, how after he had tendered his heart and hand, he could so speedily change his views, and see her, without regret, the bride of another; but the matter will be made evident. The count though assured by the village surgeon, that his injury was not dangerous, did not feel satisfied with the opinion of this son of Galen, desired that his family physician should be summoned, but as railroads were not, and the scientific world had never even dreamed of the wonders of the electric telegraph, the doctor did not make his appearance very speedily; the count, also, invoked the ghostly services of Father Vincent, who after hearing his confession, enjoined as a penance, that he should think no more of the fraulein Bettina, and make her all the amends he could.

Two more days elapsed, and the count, who had daily improved, saw with some dismay the arrival of his physician from Vienna, who perfectly approved of the treatment of his rustic colleague, said that the count could not be in better hands; pocketed his fee of one hundred ducats, grumbled because he had been kept so long from the city, and, stepping into his carriage, returned to his patients with all imaginable speed.

Palfi was naturally generous, and in the solitude of a sick room reflected severely on his conduct to the fraulein. Though naturally generous, he had been spoiled by excessive adulation, still some sparks of virtue were left, and he bitterly lamented that he had ever caused Bettina a moment's uneasiness. Sending for Andernach, he explained the whole

state of the case to the worthy man, and desired that he would bestow his daughter on the artist, adding that he was a young man of excellent character, and fast rising in his art.

Andernach said that he did not know. He did not think that his little girl was in love with any one.

The count soon convinced him to the contrary, and assured him that there would not be the slightest difficulty in obtaining the fraulein's consent, and sending for Dame Sophia, asked what she thought of the matter. With her opinion the reader is already acquainted, and the task of persuading her young mistress to change her condition was not difficult.

Beaten on all sides, Andernach was compelled to yield, and Palfi, who was not a man to do any thing by halves, ordered the dress and necklace, gave the necessary orders for the banquet, and when all was ready summoned the artist. The newly married pair went to Vienna in the count's carriage, and the old janitress, who had been previously warned by one of the count's servants, had fires made and a supper prepared. Two new apartments in the upper part of the building, where Kleinfeldt had his studio, were refurnished, and many articles, by the careful affection of Dame Sophia, found their way from the brown cottage and imparted at once a homelike feeling to the old rooms. It may be that Dame Sophia cherished the idea that some day she might be in Vienna. Even Peter had not forgotten his young lady, and among the articles that were unpacked, she found a huge cheese, with a laborious looking note, intimating that the same was a gift from Peter, and that the donor sincerely hoped that the artist and M'lle Bettina would live happily together.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DIPLOMAT'S STUDY—A GLANCE AT HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

"I can tell you one thing, plainly; that, when a man once enters diplomacy, he puts his neck in a yoke from which he is indeed fortunate if he can ever slip it out."—*Temple.*

"Tell the count that I wish to see him," said a well dressed young man, with a strong French accent.

"I will see, sir," was the cautious reply of the well-trained secretary, "if his lordship be at liberty to receive you. Meantime be pleased to sit."

The impatient youth took his seat. The other slowly quitted the apartment, and returned, after an absence of ten minutes, with his master's compliments, "would the Secretary be pleased to walk up?" The visitor bowed, and, following his senior, soon found himself in the private reception room of the man who then governed the Austrian empire. Its ostensible ruler was a mere puppet—thought, acted, and spoke precisely as Coun. Rezenstein would have him.

The count himself was bold, astute, and unprincipled; so that he accomplished his own purposes, he cared little what happened to the rest of mankind. A favorite measure was on the tapis, which the Austrian court was exceedingly anxious to promote, but at which the French cabinet, and the able statesman then at the head of the French government slightly demurred.

"Well, Monsieur de Beaupre, how goes the world with you?" said the count, gayly.

"Oh, the old fashion; but I should think that such matters would but little interest you."

"You forget the ancient maxim, 'that the bow cannot always be bent, else it will snap.'"

The speaker smiled, but lines of deep reflection were engraved on his countenance, and his eye, keen as that of the king of birds, was eagerly fastened on his interlocutor, and the smallest glance did not escape him; he knew that his companion was vain and frivolous, and thought that something could be gathered from him.

"You are right, but at the same time, it is so queer, to think of a prime minister, as interested in such matters."

"Where did you go last night."

"To the Princess Batthiani's; the best people in Vienna, are always there. I saw De Montcalm. At last, thought the Premier, I am on the right track, and shall get what I want from this simpleton."

"I have not spoken with him, nor has he been here for several weeks."

"He seemed dissatisfied, and out of humor."

"Did he assign any cause?"

"No, but I think I can tell what it was."

"You are jesting."

"No, I am serious, and as we are on confidential terms, I think that I will tell you what he said."

"You are the master of your own actions, and will do what you think best," said the premier, too wise to exhibit the slightest symptoms of anxiety, though he felt that the subsidy, which was in process of negotiation between Spain and Austria, depended on the

good will of France, and he was ready to make any sacrificee to gain it.

"Well, I suppose that I might as well tell you."

"You remember the last distribution of orders to the foreign embassies."

The minister nodded assent.

"Well then Montcalm did not get the order, that he wanted, you know that he belonged to one of the oldest families in Burundy."

"Yes."

"And he felt mortified that de Chapelle was knighted, and presented with a ribbon; and that Irishman from Connaught."

"The Irishman from Connaught," repeated he count, inquiringly.

"Oh, yes, you know who I mean perfectly well, O'Reilly or O'Nugent, or some such name."

"The name has perhaps slipped your memory," the count smiled internally, his spy had been there, and all was prospering as he desired.

"Even he got a title, and Montcalm was entirely neglected; and if we go in the score of nobility, Montcalm can show the oldest pedigree, the Irishman at most, can only trace his descent for six hundred years, and Montcalm can show eight."

Idiots, thought the count, when the interests of an empire are at stake, these idiots can quarrel about such trifles.

"Yes, I have always heard that Montcalm's family was one of the most ancient among the Provincial nobility."

"Yes, and then he is intimate with the secretary of the prime minister, who though not a man of talent, greatly influences his master; at least the good natured part of the world says."

"The good natured part of the world?"

"Yes, by that we mean the ill tempered and envious; I myself should not be surprised, if Montcalm exercised some influence over the minister, through his secretary."

"Oh nonsence, a boy like that."

The minister pondered, and when the circumstance was brought to his memory recolcted that young Montcalm, who filled a ubordinate part at the French embassy, had ot been gifted, when the last distribution of orders was made, and mentally promised himself, that the slight should be repaired.

The secretary at this part of the conversation entered the room, and informed the premier, that a messenger below wished to see him, and would deliver his dispatches into no hands but his.

"Admit him," was the brief order, and a *travel stained man,* with mud bespattered boots, and a shabby cloak, entered the premier's reception room; and bowing, handed a packet of papers.

"You have executed your mission, well; take him below and give him some refreshment," said the count to the secretary; "you will excuse me Monseiur de Beaupre for a moment, while I cast my eye over these papers."

The envelope was torn off, and carefully laid aside in a drawer, and the pages of the dispatch, which were written in a peculiar cipher, eagerly scanned; the contents of the dispatch were exceedingly distasteful to the count; the person on whom he most relied to second his efforts, was dead, and he must have some one in Paris to push the matter, or what he desired would be lost; the wily statesman did not change a muscle, but ringing for his carriage desired that it might be got ready, and invited Beaupre to accompany him to a drive in the Platz; carriage after carriage passed them, in that resort of the gay and fashionable. Montcalm was there on horseback, and returned the count's cordial salutation, with a polite, but haughty bow.

A little flattery and a few yards of ribbon will soon change that incipient frown into a smile; the measure shall be carried, the emperor will do exactly as I desire, and then the coveted honor shall be given to Montcalm. The hour the count had allotted for his exercise duly passed, and he still lingered in the hopes of seeing Montcalm, but fruitlessly, and retired to his cabinet to resume his labors.

The premier was not a man of ordinary talents, still at the present he felt that he had been foiled, and that the danger was not over; on his arrival at his palace, he instantly inquired if another packet had arrived, and passed the evening till midnight in arranging papers and forming plans for the future: at last he conceived the plan of consulting the Black Crook.

Too self-reliant to take counsel of any one, and yet tinctured with the follies of the past, he repaired to the residence of the Black Crook, and eagerly demanded an interview; the adept himself opened the door, and at once knew his visitor; but had sufficient tact to conceal it.

"I would read the oracles of the Fates."

"To-night?"

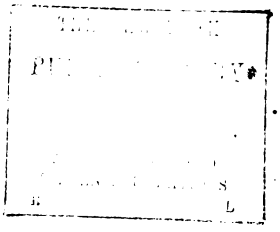
"At once."

"Your wish shall be gratified, but in what manner?"

"By the stars."

"Be it so."

The Black Crook and the count ascended to the top of the house, where there was an ob-



ory; and the Black Crook said to his
nion, "were you born in winter or
er?"
ıe last day of the last month of the

'ere you the oldest child?"
ıe only child."
adept fixed his eyes keenly on the count,
ore the scrutiny unflinchingly, and said:
is well. When you came into the
Mars and Venus were in the ascen-
ınd Mercury still had power, a very
ble conjunction: when the stars are
ted, mortals must be silent, and hear
'embling the decrees of fate."
ıble instruments were produced, the
s carefully examined, and after a
of some half hour, the Black Crook
ned:
ıee the mighty Aldebaran, who sits
o the constellation of the ship; the
rothers, Castor and Pollux, shift their
ıs; Venus shines with her usual bril-
"
t what does all this portend?" impetu-
ıterrupted the count. "I did not come
hold a discourse about the stars."
sh man, be silent," replied the Black
with an air of imposing dignity, "as I
ıaid, when mortals interrogate destiny,
w speaks through the lips of one of the
t of her servants, the symbols must be
ain, ere their signification can be un-
d; peace, and interrupt me no more;
ll must be recommenced, ere I can tell
ly the signs of the starry heavens."
adjured the count was silent, and the
rook a second time swept the heavens
ı instrument.
ın now answer any questions that you
ı fit to put to me."
ount paused for a moment, and asked:
ll I succeed in what I am about to
ke?"
t for the good or the ill of mankind?"
the count, hardened in deception, and
to all the shifts and evasions of diplo-
rembled as this question was put in a
l clear voice.
ınnot tell—men might differ about it."
t in your opinion right or wrong?"
ı the count hesitated. In his transac-
ı had not been accustomed to consult
ıce. This matter, fortunately, was for
l of Europe, and he was enabled with
onscience to reply that it could injure

ı will succeed in almost every thing
ı undertake; high rank and countless
treasures in gold will be yours, but you will not be happy."

"Not happy?"

"No, you will not be happy; ask the beggar, as he creeps along, scarcely sheltered from the inclement breath of winter, and suffering the pinching pangs of hunger, whether gold would not be a panacea for most of his ills; ask the toiling needle woman who in countless garrets of this vast city, by the light of a solitary candle, toils at the dress, to be worn at the next court ball and who by the most unintermitting labor, can scarcely earn bread for herself and babes, whether a heavy purse would not be a relief; go, proud noble, for such your dress and voice proclaim you, and interrogate the famished artisan, who makes the night, as well as the day, the witness of his toils, and inquire of him, whether he would not consider a little of that superfluous cash, which you so freely waste on your own personal gratification, an inestimable boon, you would have everything, rank, gold, beauty, talent; learn then that the beneficent deity never grants to one alone, all."

"I do not ask for all."

"Nay, but you shuddered when you were told that destiny lavished on you all that men prize most, and yet, you are dissatisfied. Go, you have heard your fate, the stars will open no more the gates of the future to such unbelievers; farewell, my task is ended."

The count at once saw that further remonstrance would be useless, and placing a well lined purse in the adept's hand, retired.

Everything that he touched succeeded; wealth poured in upon him in Pactolian streams; the title of count was exchanged for prince; all these orders of the continent were placed at his disposal; his different palaces were perfect museums of art; every thing that could please either eye or ear, was fitted up with a lavish profusion, in those habitations of luxury; and yet the prince was not happy; why not—perhaps the reader may suggest, that he had quarreled with his sovereign; his name was celebrated throughout the empire, as the wise and judicious friend of his imperial master, and the age considered justly.

The heir to all these vast possessions, and this ancient, and long descended title, was an idiot, and as the estates were strictly entailed, after his death, and that of his luckless son, they would descend to a relative whom the count detested, and with whom he would hold no intercourse.

Perhaps the ills of life are more equally balanced, than the majority of mankind are disposed to admit.

CHAPTER XIV.

COUNT PALFI PAYS A VISIT TO THE COUNTESS LINGOTSKI.

And how, pray you, tell me, do these women of rank, spend their time?

Inez. Well, Madam, they do a little of every thing; embroider till they weary of the fabric; knit till they drop a stitch, go in and see a neighbor, or perhaps, if they are dressed, and a man asks to see them, for whom they have a fancy, they will go down and see him.

Mariana. That is a most idle way of spending time.

Inez. Madam, you are right.—*The Caliph's Daughter.*

Count Palfi returned from the country, perfectly cured of any love, so far as Madame Kleinfeldt was concerned; but he began to think, that a wife was a very necessary appendage to a house, and he determined that his elegant town residence, should not be long without a mistress, and turned over in mental review the fair dames of the imperial capital; smart women he detested, and yet he would not marry a fool; the wine was untasted, and the game pie on the table uncut, his speculations were now narrowed to two individuals only: the Countess Lingotski, and the Princess Lobkowitz; the former was apt to be sarcastic; the latter at times, too silent; but what was a poor man to do; he would go and see both; Lingotski this morning, aye, at once.

This resolution made, his appetite returned, and after having done ample justice to the dainties set before him, he ordered his carriage and summoned his valet to assist at his toilet. Equipped for conquest, the count departed on his voyage of discovery.

The porter of the countess opened his eyes when he saw the count's carriage drive into the yard, and knew not what to make of it. In this emergency, before announcing Palfi's arrival to his mistress, resolved that he would consult Christina, who had been for many years the tire woman of the countess' mother, and at her death descended to her daughter, who was a little wrinkled but still exceedingly fresh, and pattered about the house, as if she were sixteen, instead of sixty, and the evil disposed members of the household asserted that the old woman still considered herself as young and beautiful, as she was forty years ago; she had inherited most of the dowager's silks and her watch, and by a stranger might readily have been mistaken for the mistress of the house; she had never been married, not "as she was accustomed to say for want of offers, but then these men, are such horrid *creatures, no one knows* who to trust;" and yet report with her evil tongue added: that if the steward of a certain nobleman, and that nobleman was Count Palfi, offered himself, Christina would not hesitate long in changing her condition. The Count alighted from his carriage, and was received in the most gracious manner, by the veteran Soubrette, she would do herself the honor of informing her mistress of his most gracious lordship's arrival. "Would not his excellency partake of some refreshment?"

The Count exceedingly flattered at the empressement of the serf-constituted mistress of ceremonies, who ran to inform the countess, that the most noble Count Palfi, was below stairs and craved the honor of a personal interview.

"Why! to hear you talk," at the first paus made by her loquacious attendant, "one would suppose that I had never seen or spoken to a man before. Why I see the creatures every hour of the day; they are no such rarities."

"True! most gracious lady, they flock around you like bees, surrounding a pot of honey."

"As for my part," replied——

But the countess who dreaded Christina's tongue, when once put in motion, sent her on an errand, to a distant part of the palace, completed her dress, and descended to receive her guest; thinking, as she threw on her cashmere, clasped her diamond bracelet, and adjusted a stray curl; that after all, she was not so certain of catching Auersperg; that really she did not care a pin for him, but would like to snatch him from Princess Lobkowitz, and exhibit him as her admirer in public.

The count rose as the lady entered the apartment, and after the usual ceremonies had been exchanged, Palfi observed, "I had not the pleasure of seeing your ladyship on the Platz, yesterday."

"No, a dressmaker who had received some choice Indian silks, threw them open to the public, and like the others I went."

"I suppose that your ladyship could not resist so great a temptation."

"No more than the men, for they are pretty nearly all alike, can resist the temptation of a sale of horses, no matter how full your stables, you are always ready to attend another animal to your stock."

The count winced, she had him, but on rather a sore spot, but rallying, he replied in the same tone.

"The horse is certainly a noble animal, and then you know, we must have our recreations."

"And we ours."

"I am too just to deny it."

"Have you seen the Prince Auersperg lately."

"My acquaintance with him is exceedingly limited, I think that he is Vienna still; your ladyship may not perhaps know that I have been confined to my bed for more than ten days, that I have only recently returned to the city, and consequently can give you but few details of what is passing in the *beau monde*."

"Then as you are a stranger to all that has passed, I will tell you some of the news; the artist Kleinfeldt is married."

"So I have heard."

"Then you have not been so much out of the world as you say; nay more, perhaps you have even seen Madame Kleinfeldt."

"Yes, and I can with truth aver, that she is as pretty a little rustic, as I ever desire to see."

"But then she has no style."

"But your ladyship perhaps will deign to remember, that she is a novice as yet, in the ways of the town, and that"—

"Count, Count, I really believe that you are in love with this little rustic."

"Who, I," said the count, blushing, as he strove to conceal his emotion.

"Count that blush tells tales."

"Believe me, Madam," said the count, more seriously than was his wont, "that the artist is a worthy fellow, and that his little wife"—

"You have seen her then," interrupted the countess.

"I had the honor of partaking of her father's hospitality. I took a tour in the country, and was detained longer than I expected."

"All the men in Vienna are raving about her."

"Why, just now, if I correctly understood your ladyship, you said that she had no style."

"And I say so again; it is just that very absence of style, that makes her so attractive; nods to every one, thinks all the pretty speeches that are made, are true; and then is so free with her invitations; I will tell you the last *bon mot* about Madame Kleinfeldt; it is too good to be lost: The old princess dowager De Ligne was in the gallery looking at some copies, which the artist had lately made for her; when Madame came in, the princess was inspecting some Flemish pictures, admired a huge loaf of country bread, and a large cheese and intimated a wish, to have some like them.

"Madame Kleinfeldt, without any more ceremony, invited the princess to come up stairs and eat some, as she had just received a present from the country; but I must say, that she was exceedingly kind and liberal, and few women in Vienna, would have done as much as she; I liked her all the better."

"Your ladyship is right, generosity and good feeling are not so common in this world, that we can afford to trample on the parties possessing those qualities. Auersperg has them."

"And if I am not mistaken," said the princess," with considerable animation, "they are not strangers to your lordship's bosom." These words were pronounced seriously, and as if the speaker were in earnest.

"But we are getting sentimental: when I was in the country, I enjoyed exeeedingly, the fresh air, trees and flowers; and I have lately thought, that I would give a rustic *fete* at one of my castles."

"Oh that would be charming, and have only what the land produces; fruit, milk, cake and wine."

"It is at least a novel invention, and will charm some of the *beau monde*, who like myself are fatigued, with style and state."

"When shall it be?"

"I will consult my steward, and let your ladyship know; perhaps you will be so kind, as to act as one of the lady patronesses, and then we shall have a rustic dance; you may be sure, that everything that the estate can produce, shall be at the service of my guests, and I shall open the ball with the Baroness Teleki."

"She will think herself young again."

"She has never been old; with her the hair may change, the skin become wrinkled, but she has that perpetual youth, springing from a pure mind, and an upright heart. But I see by the pendule, that I have already engrossed too much of your ladyship's time, and must retire."

"He is mine! He is mine!" said the countess, as she watched his retiring figure, and then that rustic *fete*. "I am but a poor manager, if I do not play my cards so well, that I shall be mistress of that, and all the other possessions of the Count Palfi; but we shall see."

CHAPTER XV.

AN ALCHEMIST HARD AT WORK.

Alchemy had a great fascination in the middle ages, and though the adepts did not discover the philosopher's stone, or if they did (see note) the secret is now lost. Stul it was not without its uses; the Moors had some practical knowledge of the art of chemistry, which in fact, is derived from a word in their language, signifying the occult science; the *auri sacra fames*, then, as now inflamed mankind, and though many fortunes were lost, still science was greatly advanced.—*Buckle.*

"Night's candles are burned out, and jocund day, stands tiptoe, on the misty mountain tops."—*Romeo and Juliet.*

Day had just dawned, and the alchemist unlocking the door, opened his studio, and summoned the negro, who generally assisted him in his chemical operations.

A number of MSS. worn volumes were taken from the shelves, spread on the table, and eagerly perused by the Black Crook.

"This will do, at last I have hit on what I wanted," and he re-perused eagerly the MSS. Hope and avarice lighting up every feature. "Now, if this succeed, I shall have what most men eagerly desire; I shall then abandon the practice of magic, because I shall make gold, even beyond my most sanguine expectations. Let me now only discover the elixir of perpetual youth, the secret of wiping out wrinkles, of giving fresh lustre to the eye, and painting the withered parchment looking cheek, with the carmine of sweet sixteen. What a source of revenue! all the carriages of the nobility in the world would flock to my studio, and I would scarcely dismiss one, ere another would make her appearance; and then to look at the yellow glittering darlings heaped up in the greatest quantities in my coffers; but now to business," and turning to the dwarf said:

"Build me a fire."

Charcoal, and wood, were produced; a flame soon shone in the furnace, and the room became suffocatingly hot; the negro intimated a wish to withdraw, and his master looking sternly at him, said:

"This will be a long session, and I will not be disturbed nomatter who calls, I cannot be seen."

"The dwarf intimated that he perfectly understood, and would obey."

The scales were next brought into requisition, and a quantity of gold, was tested carefully weighed, and then placed in a crucible. An ancient work on chemistry, in which all the discoveries from the earliest times were recorded; acids and other drugs were added, and an odor of sulphur, pervaded the apartment. "The charm works; all my calculations, are perfect," joyfully exclaimed the adept, as he bent over the fire, and saw that another ingredient must be added. The MSS was again consulted, fuel heaped on the flames, a quantity of *aqua regia*, added to the other materials in the furnace, and the mixture allowed to work; two hours were passed in the most torturing anxiety, and the fire gradually permitted to subside. The crucible was then taken out; the residuum carefully examined, and the Black Crook exultingly exclaimed:

"Another trial, and I shall be sure to succeed?"

A gleam of delight, shot athwart his sinister countenance, which was speedily succeeded by a look of the deepest despondency; if I do succeed, of what real use, will this be to me, but that shall not trouble me, let me get the money, and then, all will go well.

The utensils were carefully cleaned; the fire freshly kindled, and the adept was ready to repeat the experiment, but this time bethought himself of certain Venetian sequins, celebrated for the purity of the metal. A huge silver casket, with a complicated lock, was opened, and the coins placed on the table.

As the Black Crook contemplated them, he exclaimed I well remember how I got these. "A noble lady in Madrid bestowed them upon me for a draught, but I did not ask her, to what use she put it. You have been my guests for many years," said he, addressing the coins, as if they had life, and could hear. "I thought, that we never should have parted, but science demand it, and you must go. Let me see what Cornelius Agrippa says, and, read aloud the following passage:

"The metal must be of the finest, purest, and as free as possible from alloy; this then, will be exactly, what is required, pure and free from alloy. So far so good; we shall next add the requisite materials, rare essences, biting acids, and heat up to a certain degree. These are essential, and I have them all, the other materials were added. The time carefully marked with the hour glass, and the adept prepared to wait four hours, till he could ascertain the success of his experiment."

Grepo had repeatedly rapped at the door of the labratory, and been as frequently denied. Dame Barbara knocked at the window, and clamored for admittance on the plea of special and particular business, and was also refused. Nothing should interfere with the important matter on hand. The time at last expired, the furnace was opened and its contents carefully examined. The adept compared the produce

of the crucible with the same article described in the Works of Paracelsus, and muttered—"The weight, color, and substance are the same; the tests will not work, but it is an improvement on the last. I have been toiling for the past thirty years, and never brought it so close before."

"You may go," said he to the black, who joyfully obeyed, and was only too glad to be released from such thraldom.

When alone, the Black Crook tested the various specimens, and verified the results with the greatest exactness on paper, but with the same success as before. "Strange," he muttered, "to come so near and never succeed. Should I be so fortunate, my name will be handed down to posterity as one of the benefactors of my race, and the kings and princes of the earth will court me for my secret. This will be the end of all my labors and toils; the name of the despised wizard, the Black Crook, will be forgotten, under the splendor and importance of this discovery, and I shall rank with the philosophers of Greece and Rome."

CHAPTER XVI.

CATALINA MEETS AN OLD FRIEND UNEXPECTEDLY, WHO MAKES STRANGE REVELATIONS.

"Where have I been since we parted?"

"Oh, in divers lands; I have travelled on the sea, I have been to the Indies. Some, who have not heard of me for a long time, believed me dead: but here I am again."—*Holback's Wooden Spoon.*

Catalina had at last won a smile from her mistress. She followed her about like a dog, and with that fidelity so seldom seen in the human species was never happy in her absence. Gradually the princess began to trust her, and one evening sent her on an errand to the lower part of the city. Declining the attendance of one of the male servants, the gypsey sat out alone, transacted the business, and was on her return home, after a short visit to the sick soldier Moritz, when she felt a slight touch on the shoulder, and turned to see who it was.

The person who thus gently, as it were arrested her, drew her to the nearest lamp, and stood as if anxious for an examination. Catalina closely scanned the features thus presented to her, and suddenly exclaimed:

"Can it be, or does the grave give up its dead? Do I really see you in the flesh?"

"*Yes, I am the man you* suppose me to be, warm, sentient, full of life, though somewhat grievously afflicted with the disease called poverty. In plain [illegible] am Diego Huelin."

"And how did you come here?"

"You may well ask that question, and no one is more surprised than myself to be here, but I came after my wife."

"Your wife! I did not know that you were married."

"No, I was not anxious to publish it, and I don't think that my wife was, if I could find her."

"Who is she?"

"That is more than I can tell."

"Where did you marry her?"

"In Madrid."

"Strange that you should wed a woman, and not know who she is."

"And yet it is all true," replied Diego.

"Perhaps you will be so kind as to tell me the story."

"Well, my good Catalina, it would give me the greatest pleasure in the world, but you may, perhaps, understand."

"That you are exceedingly hungry."

"You have hit it, and saved me the necessity of an explanation."

"Exactly, here is something for you. I do not know why, but I feel a strange inclination to hear your tale, as I have an idea that it will be of service; meet me here to-morrow evening, and I will see what more I can do for you."

Diego Huelin was one of the most prominent fighters in the bull-ring in the city of Madrid, and was renowned for his gladiatorial talents: fierce indeed must have been the bull, that he could not stab, and his name was one of the household words in Madrid; Catalina had frequently seen him in the amphitheatre, whither she and most of her tribe were accustomed to resort, as they were fond of the sport. Diego, who was of a roving temperament, was once belated at a village about twenty miles distant from Madrid, and accepted the hospitality of the tribe, this led to an acquaintance with Catalina which was never dropped.

The gypsey hurried home, and when she found her mistress alone, told her what she had done in relation to the business, with which she had been intrusted, asked for leave of absence for the evening; and mentioned that she had met a poor acquaintance.

"Whom you would like perhaps to assist."

"If your highness would be so kind."

"Here are three ducats."

Catalina went to keep the appointment, and found that Diego was faithful to his trust

"Well, I must say," said the Spaniard, pocketing the gold, "that you are one of the best friends that I ever had, and now for the story. I suppose that you are exceedingly anxious to hear it?"

"As you chose."

"Well, you remember when I was in Madrid, and engaged at the amphitheatre?"

"Perfectly."

"I was then earning plenty of money, but had not the wit to keep it; one day a note was slipped in my hand, asking me to meet a person that night behind the church of St. Isidro."

"Who brought the note?"

"A little boy. I went, and there saw a man, who asked me if I had any objection to be married, and that I would be well rewarded if I consented; he handed me twenty ounces, requesting me to meet him the next evening at the old church of the Dominicans at nine precisely. I was punctual to the instant, and the moment I appeared on the portico, a lay brother came up and said, 'you are expected, go the side altar and wait:' ten minutes elapsed, when three persons came where I was kneeling, the candles on the altar were lighted; and one of the fathers entered the sanctuary; the person whom I had seen the night before came up and whispered, there is your bride; a tall well shaped woman."

"Was she dark or fair?"

"I could not tell; she was closely veiled."

"Did she speak Spanish?"

"With a foreign accent, the priest proceeded with the marriage; the bride pronaunced the vows in an almost inaudible voice, never raised her veil; she made a movement, and dropped a ring which I picked up, and have carefully preserved ever since. When the ceremony was concluded, the same person who had seen me in the morning, placed a purse with five hundred golden ounces in my hand, the bride made me a bow, and withdrew, leaving me alone with my companion of the previous night, who said, 'you will never again meet the lady to whom you have been united, nor will you know who she is; do not attempt to follow either her or myself: if you do, I will not answer for your life, and I expressly command you not to leave this church, till a person comes, who will lead you in safety to a certain place.' I readily agreed to what he said, as I was anxious to secure the ring, as I thought that it might be useful to me. I returned to the spot where I had been standing with my bride, soon found it, carefully secured it about my person, and waited till my conductor should arrive; at eleven o'clock, a masked cavalier in dark velvet came up, and said, 'follow me.' We reached the door of the church, and soon found ourselves in the open air, where a carriage was in readiness. I entered with the mysterious stranger, who instantly bandaged my eyes; we then drove off at a rapid rate, and at the expiration of some hours, the vehicle stopped. I was assisted to alight, the same cavalier also alighted and whispered in my ear, remain here till the great clock strikes three; till then do not remove the bandage from your eyes; you may be sure, that I yielded the most promp obedience to this order, but precisely as the clock struck, tore off the handkerchief, and found myself at the Puerta del Sol. My story is done."

"Where have you been since?"

"Oh, in different places. I crossed over to the New World, and returned; but I always kept the ring."

"Have you got it with you?"

"Here it is."

This was a plain gold circlet, with a small coat of arms, and a motto in the German language, which neither could read. Catalina pondered for a moment on the strange adventure she had heard, and said to Diego—

"You will permit me to keep this ring for a time. You know that our trade is rich, and that you cannot lose by it."

"Well, I agree; and as you have already been so liberal to me, I can refuse you nothing. But where are you to be found?"

"I will not give you my address, but I will tell you where you can obtain a lodging for the present. Go to a little street, back of the convent of the Gray Nuns; not to-night, for it is too late, but not earlier than ten in the forenoon. Tell them that Catalina sent you, and they will give you accommodation—farewell; and she rapidly disappeared.

"A curious adventure," said Diego. "I have not been in Vienna twenty-four hours before I met an old acquaintance, who showers gold upon me, and provides me with a lodging—but forbids me to follow her.

Catalina at once retraced her steps, went to the modest domicile of the sick soldier, and informed him that a lodger would call upon him for his hospitality, which for she begged might be extended to him. Midnight had struck ere she entered the palace, and rousing the porter from his slumbers, passed rapidly by him, without waiting to answer any of the questions with which he assailed her. She was reserved, though courteous, to all her fellow servants, and her queenly bearing kept them at a reasonable distance. A small room opening into the sleeping apartment of

the princess was allotted for her use, and she noislessly entered. The door of the adjoining chamber was ajar, and she could see the princess reclining on her bed wrapped in the deepest slumber; one hand lay on the richly wrought damask quilt. Shading her taper, the gypsey stealthily advanced to the bedside and closely examined the hand and arm. "No, it is not there, she is not my child; but she has been kind to me, and has the dovelike eyes which I so well remember in my little Zara. Oh, where is she?" she murmured in a broken voice, and then retired to her couch.

Though unable to read or write, Catalina was a woman of great natural powers and keen observation. Fearing that if she showed the ring to one of her fellow servants some talk might be made, she would not go to the adept; and in this emergency resolved to consult a Portuguese Jew, who traded in jewels; was reputed a man of great learning, and with whom her tribe dealt. Two days after she repaired to his dwelling at dusk.

"Well, Mistress Catalina; is it you?" said the old Hebrew, who knew his visitor perfectly.

"Will you have the goodness, Master Levi, to look at this jewel, and tell me its value?"

The Israelite with the trading instinct, common to his nation, handled the ring and said: "The gold is pure and heavy, but I cannot tell its exact value; you know that the grains of gold which I buy of your people, are far more precious."

"They are found in the sands of the rivers."

"This ring evidently belongs to some noble family. I can tell that by the coat of arms. Whence did it come?"

"I cannot tell, you know that, sometimes the people who dwell in tents, become possessed of such articles; but this was not stolen."

"I believe you, here are my scales, good mistress, I will weigh it, and tell you its value to a fraction."

"Many thanks for your courtesy; but you were ever kind to the wanderers."

"This has a motto, too," said Levi.

"You know that I cannot read. What is it?"

"Trust in God,"—

Catalina possessed of all she desired, was anxious to shorten the interview, and replied briefly, but politely, to all the queries put to her by the Jew, and when he had obtained all the information he desired, he asked her if she would not have a glass of rosolio, (a cordial distilled from cherries,) at the same time filling a small glass, from a richly wrought silver flaggon.

The dwellers in the woods and fields, like not the strong waters; the crystal fluid of the god of all, is sufficient for them.

"Farewell."

The old Jew gazed after, and said: "there is a mystery about that ring, which I cannot fathom; but it is no affair of mine."

Catalina returned to the palace, and for some days was unable to effect any discovery.

Her intelligence and sagacity, endeared her greatly to her mistress who relied upon her more than any of her women, and frequently employed her on commissions requiring fidelity and discretion. One day the princess dropped a ring and the stone, which was a diamond of the purest water fell from its setting. She commanded Catalina to take the ornament to the court jeweller and get it repaired. The shop was large, and for the time elegant. Catalina addressed herself to a young artisan, who stood behind the counter, and extending the ring, was on the point of explaining her business, when a coach drove up; a footman threw open the door, and the Countess Lingotski, entered, and advancing to the place where Catalina was standing, asked the young man "if he could mend a bracelet?"

"Will your ladyship, allow me to look at it?"

The ornament was detached from the wearer's arm, and handed to the artisan.

"It is remarkably fine, and as you will observe, has my motto, and armorial crest."

"Your ladyship may rely on it, that I will do the best I can."

"I will leave the ornaments with you, and when they are done, you can send them to me."

The articles were placed on the counter, and Catalina now presented her ring. And at the same time closely examined the coat of arms, mentioned by the countess, and found it identical with that on the ring. She made no observation, but well knew that her mistress was attatched to the Prince of Auersperg; but that it was thought that he favored the countess."

"Her resolution was taken, she would, without betraying either the princess or herself, execute the set purpose of her soul; as she well knew, that by so doing, she would lose at once, and for ever, her mistress' esteem and favor. But her discretion was too great to permit her to act hastily, and she knew that she could better serve her mistress, if she acted with discretion, and determined to take no hasty steps. She well knew that the secret would be perfectly safe, as Diego had never seen his wife's face, and could scarcely recognise her voice again.

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A thousand plans floated through her brain, and each was rejected as chimerical; and yet she was resolved to secure Prince Charles for her mistress."

One day, when driving with her mistress, she met the countess with Palfi, who was now frequently seen with her in public, and saw her greet Auersperg with a bow, which was bordering on affection. This roused the alarm of the faithful creature, who watched over the Princess Lobkowitz, with the fidelity of a tigress to her young. And it might have been as safe to have robbed the one of her cubs, as to have injured the princess in any manner, with the knowledge of Catalina. She also further learned, that the countess had been in Spain, and the time tallied with that in the narrative of Diego.

Her resolution was taken. She would at once inform the countess, that she knew all her past life, and that as a condition of her silence, she must at once resign all pretensions to Prince Charles Auersperg. It would not be of any avail, if she were to go to the countess, as the waiting woman of the princess Lobkowitz."

She therefore disguised herself as an old woman, though in reality scarcely past the prime of life, and furnishing herself with a basket of flowers, went at once to the Lingotski palace, and demanded admission to the countess, which after some delay was accorded; presenting a bouquet, she besought her ladyship to purchase."

The countess looked at the flowers, and languidly refused.

"Perhaps," said the gypsey, your ladyship would like to hear news from Spain, or perhaps you remember the wedding at night, with a certain handsome young Madrileno, who fought in the amphitheatre with the bulls."

Had the thunder at that moment hurled every article in the chamber to atoms, the countess could not have been more amazed. A cold perspiration bathed her whole person, and she staggered to a chair. Catalina, terrified at the effect her words had produced, ran to the bell, but was restrained by a look.

The countess gasped and sighed, as if she saw the angel of death in the distance, and asked, after a delay of some moments, "Woman, what mean you?"

"Precisely what I say."

"I thought that that Diego was dead."

"I did not say that he was dead."

"Lives he yet?"

"Whether he lives or not, shall depend on *you; I have the secret of his whereabouts.*"

"Will he ever come to Vienna?"

"That depends entirely on yourself. I have one condition."

"And that is—"

"That you entirely and absolutely leave off all connection with the Prince of Auersperg."

"I cheerfully promise it, and if you have any knowledge of the person who—but you know what I would say—give him this gold. And accept this, as a gratuity for yourself."

Catalina waived back the money indignantly.

"Your ladyship," she exclaimed, "will excuse me; I did not work for money, but love. But I think that I can safely promise you, that you will not be annoyed, nor will I seek to unveil the mystery—farewell." Catalina courtesied profoundly, withdrew, and hastened home secure in the persuasion that she had removed a powerful rival out of her mistress' way; but she did not know the woman with whom she had been speaking. The Countess Lingotski, though in her conversation with the Black Crook, said that she was exceedingly enamored of Prince Charles Auersperg, was not in reality much in love with him. The prince was far beyond all comparison the handsomest man in Vienna, and he only lacked one thing to be the best match in the empire, and that was cash. There had long been a secret unacknowledged jealousy between the rival belles, and it was more a point of honor to snatch her lover from the Princess Lobkowitz, and showed him in public, than from any real affection for the man himself, and it did not cost her a heart pang to resign the prince to her rival.

Catalina saw Diego in the evening and said, "You had better quit Vienna."

"Why so?"

"I do not think that you will find your wife here."

"But look at that German motto."

"There are other German cities in Europe besides Vienna. Look you, Diego, you know that my tribe is rich—"

"And I am poor."

"We do not need a prophet to tell us that, but if you desire to push your fortune, I will give you some ducats."

"How many?"

"One hundred."

"That is a good round sum; I will accept your offer and go. When can you give me the money?"

"When will you be ready to depart?"

"To-morrow."

"Then I will give you what I promised, and add one hundred ducats more as an outfit."

The bargain was immediately struck, and the Spaniard quitted Vienna as he had pre-

raised, but the gold furnished by the countess proved a snare. On his way to Madrid, where he thought of resuming his former profession, he encountered a muleteer, with whom he engaged in a game at cards, suspected his antagonist of foul play, and told him as much. The hot blood of the South was fired, the knives were speedily drawn from their girdles, and a few thrusts exchanged. Diego was stabbed to the heart. The officers of justice arrived; as is too frequently the case, just ten minutes too late to arrest the murderer, who mounted on a fleet horse, and goaded by fear, never drew bridle till he saw the French frontier, rapidly crossed, and safe in the dominions of his most Christian majesty, could snap his fingers at all the Alguazils of Castile and Leon. Such was Spanish justice not two centuries ago. Failing to secure the culprit, the officers searched the pockets of the lifeless Diego, and appropriated the golden spoil to pay for masses, meanwhile interring the body in an old cemetery. Thus was the countess freed from a husband whom she had never seen, and of whose death she was never informed. That lady was for some time in considerable anxiety, but hearing no more of the terrible old woman, imagined that the danger was over.

CHAPTER XVII.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN CATALINA AND THE BLACK CROOK.

When two persons meet, who are mutually afraid—it is curious to behold the cautious advances they make to each other, and how neither makes a movement, without closely watching to see what effect it will have on the other.—*Spectator.*

Night had just dropped her covering over the earth, and invested all nature with that silvery mantle about which poets rave, and which painters have so often and so vainly endeavored to portray, when Catalina left the palace to seek an interview with the Black Crook, and hastily travelled the streets, till she gained the spot; tapping at the door, she encountered the gaze of the dwarf, who would have repulsed her, but she gently put him aside, and entered the reception room of the adept, who was alone, and occupied as usual, in some occult studies; he raised his head from the book, and started when he saw his visitor, abruptly demanded why he was favored with her company.

"Why you are favored with my company," returned Catalina, "I tell you Ramon de Herrera.

"Witch, fiend, hag, do not mention that name."

"My tongue is my own, and I shall use it as I please."

"I say again, Ramon de Herrera, what have you done with my child, my little Zara."

"Woman, what have I to do with your child."

Yes, my child, whom you have sacrificed to your devilish wiles."

"I repeat again, that I cannot tell, what has become of that child; I know nothing about her."

"Hark ye, Ramon de Herrera, I know all about your residence in Spain, why you left Madrid, and how you murdered that youthful Jewess."

"Murdered the Jewess, I would have died to have saved her; she was th light of my life, and the apple of my eye; I kill her; I would have died to have saved her."

"False, lying and deceitful hypocrite, do not pretend to impose upon me; you tried the effect of a nauseous drug, that you compounded, upon her; she sickened, no art could save her, and all from that drug; call you that love?"

The Black Crook shuddered, his countenance was livid with agony, and fear was painted in every lineament; still the merciless woman continued:

"Do you remember that young German student, who came from Berlin, Franz von Ahlenfeld; he was young, fresh and gay; he too fell a victim to your wiles."

"A victim to my wiles.?"

"Yes, a victim to your wiles."

"A certain noble lady, whose name I will not mention, had married a marquis, many years her senior; she applied to you for a poison, to put his son, by a former wife, out of the way; and what did you do; you compounded some of your infernal nostrums, and just tried the effects on the young Prussian, who languished and then died; when his body was opened, the physicians said, that he had perished from inflammation of the liver; shortly after the oldest son of the marquis, also expired with the same disease; and it was observed that the symptoms were identical."

"Woman! Woman!" exclaimed the Black Crook in an agony. "Why will you torment me? Why vainly recall the shadows of the past? Why people this chamber with the phantoms that have gone before me to the tomb?"

"Because said Catalina, with the vengeful fury of a fiend. I am determined, that you shall suffer. Again I say, where is my child, Where is my little Zara? were I satisfied that the earth enclosed her, and that she was sleeping quietly beneath the green sod. I might rest, but in this dreadful uncertainty, I am like the dove, whom you christians say, Noah dismissed from the ark, and who could find no rest for the sole of her foot. I am now like that gentle bird. You must tell me what you know about Zara, my little Zara. Shall I never see her again, with those dove like eyes, and her gentle winning ways; her pretty prattle. And how she loved me, how she rejoiced when I came in, ow she grieved, when I was absent."

The Black Crook, was again convulsed, but repeated the same denial as before. Catalina cast on him a look of credulity, and pitilessly resumed.

"And then that wretched negro, I remember well, when you first bought him, the hapless wretch was but a year and a half old. Even the woman, who tended him had some pity, but you had occasion for him, in your cursed machinations, and he must be tongueless. You tore out the member by the roots from the mouth of that unoffending creature, whose only crime consisted in the color of his skin, and his helpless innocence. Can you deny that you have deprived him of the organ of speech for your own vile purposes? Deny that at your peril; Roman de Herrera."

"Am I responsible to you for whatever I have done," said the adept in an agony. "Why should you torment me thus?"

"Why should I torment you thus? Do you think that I am destitute of the common feeling of humanity. Do you suppose that I have not the feelings of a mother: rob the tigress of her whelps, and she will make the air hideous with her cries; invade the wild and desert place, that the lioness selects for her nursery. Steal away the cub, which little as it is, resembles its lordly sire, and the desolate queen of the forest will skim the ground in pursuit of her lost darling; swim the most rapid streams, and lose not a moment in executing her just vengeance; for beast as she is, she is still a mother, and responds to the holy instinct that the God of nature has implanted in her bosom. You deprived me of my child, and yet expect me to submit quietly. You are asking impossibilities, assure me of my child's fate, and as I said before, I could be satisfied."

"How can I tell, what I do not know."

"She was last seen under your roof, and all I can extract from you, was that she died, but how, you will not tell me."

"At this period of time how I can remember—"

"When you first told me she was dead, it was all that you thought proper to say; not even a lock of hair from my darling's head was given me, nor one of her little sandals, and yet you ask me to be contented with what you have chosen to tell me."

"I have told you the truth."

"The truth!" replied Catalina. "Speaking of truth, do you remember the night the three young Neapolitans supped with you, they were never seen alive again. Poor fellows! they, too, like the Prussian student, were in the very morning of life; perhaps the garden in the old house near the Convent of the Carmelites might tell a tale. Ramon de Herrera, what answer make you to this? where are those young men who were never seen alive, as I once before told you, after they entered your house?"

As Catalina uttered these last words, she quitted her seat, drawing herself up to her full height, and steadily regarded the adept, who trembled under her unflinching gaze.

"The time will come, and, mark me! it is not far distant, when you will regret that you have ever torn the mother from her child, and allowed her to remain in ignorance of her fate. There is an old proverb in our tribe, which I have often seen verified: hold a stone in your hand for twenty years, and the twenty-first you will have a chance to cast it at your enemy. My time will come; nay, it is fast approaching."

"I dread you not; my spells are more potent than yours."

"Your spells! I fear you not, or a legion like you! We have spells in our tribe which have descended to us long ere the Christian's God, as they assert, descended on earth. The ancient Egyptians have passed, and a few withered mummies, destitute of life, and crumbling fragments of mortality alone remain of a once powerful race; but we, their wandering children, have maintained for ages the secrets of our ancestors, which we have not yet delivered to the pale faces, and in all probability never shall. Your spells! the charms of an hour—the spells of a manikin!"

"But Catalina—"

"Nay, Ramon de Herrera, that is the only name that I shall give you. I tell you that my vengeance is not yet satisfied; but will you tell me one thing, and then, perhaps, we may be friends? No, I am wrong, not friends—it would be a prostitution of the term—but I could at least regard you with less feeling

than now. Tell me, where is my child?" and the mother's eyes flashed, her heart beat almost audibly, and her countenance bore an expression of the most agonizing suspense as she gazed on the Black Crook.

The adept, staggered by this direct question, bent his eyes to the ground and was silent.

"You know, and you will not tell," resumed Catalina, almost savagely. "Ah! you have the heart, Ramon de Herrera, to keep a mother in such agony. Oh! if one ray of pity can melt that stern bosom—if you have any mercy—I beseech you tell me?"

"I have already told you that I know not where she is," was the cool reply of the Black Crook, "and I told you years ago that she was dead."

"But of what did she die—of what disease—was she drowned or stabbed? In pity tell me."

"I have already told you, more than once, that she is dead; and the grave is not in the habit of surrendering her victims. I shall say no more."

"Then dread my vengeance."

"Your vengeance! What can an outcast like you do to me?"

This last bitter taunt roused the anger of Catalina, who, casting a look of mingled hate and defiance on her persecutor, exclaimed:

"Yes, my vengeance! You well know that when you were in Madrid I caused the Grand Inquisitor to take measures for your prompt arrest, and nothing but the gratitude of that grandee of Compostello saved you, and enabled you by a timely warning to leave the kingdom. It was I that baffled your infamous plot against the Marchioness de Guzman, and saved her life, when you would have had her sip the vilest potion that was ever brewed. It was I that saved from your hellish arts the young Duchess of San Lucar, whom you would have poisoned on her sick bed, when your services were called in as a leech, but I knowing that you would do anything for gold, and having by chance seen one of her grace's bitterest foes steal out of your house at midnight, conceived the idea that you and he were plotting some mischief. I went immediately to the palace, sought an interview with her chief woman, and, though I did not criminate you, besought her to allow her mistress to partake of neither food nor drink which she did not herself prepare. Thus I was enabled to effect two objects: I saved the life of a good woman, who in the hour of sore trial had been kind to me and mine, and I defeated your nefarious plans. You talk of *an outcast! Who is more* of an outcast than *yourself? the very boys* shout as you pass, the vengeance of the gypsey shall reach you yet. No matter in what land you go, there shall Catalina de Souza follow you; whether you seek refuge in the East, whence come the gold and gems wherewith the Christians so love to deck themselves; whether you dwell in the sunny South, where Nature holds her court all the year round, or whether you select as your abode the icy and frozen North, there, Ramon de Herrera, will Catalina de Souza track you, with the most undying hate and the most restless perseverance. I am not a weak painted fool, as are some of those who surround you, and who would wed even such a thing of deformity as you for the sake of the gold you are reputed to possess. We shall meet again, Ramon de Herrera, and you will remember what I have said."

She then quitted the apartment without casting another glance at the Black Crook, who sat as if glued to his chair while Catalina delivered her philippic.

"She has at last gone," said the Black Crook, with a sigh of relief, "and I would if I could, have told her where the girl was; but the offer was too tempting to be refused: five hundred golden ounces fresh from the royal mint, if I would only exchange the living child for the dead, and then the child herself would be so greatly benefitted. Which is better, to be a duchess revelling in luxury, or a pauper, dwelling on the hill side, scarcely defended from the inclemency of the weather, or living in a palace, and sleeping under a satin quilt; then the nurse pleaded so hard, her lady was so lonely without the child. She would be so rejoiced to have it, she could never tell it from her own, and the ounces. So I consented; the little Zara was taken away, and her mother will never seen her again. I thought when I left Spain, that I never should be hold Catalina de Souza more, but what can I do now; it would give mortal offence to the duchess to learn that the girl whom she cherishes as a daughter, is only a gypsey, and that she has not one drop of noble blood in her veins; let me think, the girl must be pretty well grown; it is now nearly sixteen years since we parted, and then she could just walk and talk, and had a thousand winning ways, but it would be madness now to put Catalina on the track, and then what would become of my five hundred ounces. I should be compelled to return them, and of that I cannot even think for one moment. No, no, she must go without her daughter, the duchess shall not be disappointed, and I will keep my ounces. Grego, attend me to my chamber."

The drudge bearing a lighted taper, pre-

ceeded his master to his chamber, and after assisting him to undress, retired long after the Black Crook had settled himself on his pillow, he came to the conclusion that he could not change his conduct, and was soon lost in slumber.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A RUSTIC FETE AT THE CASTLE OF COUNT PALFI.

I tell you, sir, that these court dames are very fond of novelty, and will go a great way to find it, no matter where; nay, some will go so far, that they will even play at being shepherdesses.—*Cleante.*

The fashionable world of Vienna was thrown into a whirl of excitement, by the rustic fete that Count Palfi had promised to give, and to which all the most distinguished in the gay imperial capital were bidden, not forgetting Kleinfeldt, his fair spouse and his friend Lederer. Puffengruntz, the old steward with whom the reader is perfectly familiar, had been sent beforehand to superintend the preparations, and with him, as there was no female at the head of the count's household, the nurse of the countess Lingotski, was associated with him. She had long had a secret affection for the steward, though no one dared to hint as much in her presence, still she was delighted with the opportunity of showing her power, and displayed at second-hand, all the airs and graces of the countess.

The grounds were spacious and elegant, and the interior well furnished; eight rooms *en suite*, were thrown open for the reception of visitors, and pleasure was the pass word of the hour; the main entrance was handsomely decorated with colored lamps, arranged to form the word welcome; the trees were hung with the gayest garlands; and the count himself, in the robes of a Venetian senator, was standing at the main entrance, to receive his guests; carriage after carriage, deposited the flower of the Viennese nobility; the elite of the foreign society then resident in all parts of the empire; graced the festivities with their presence; Hungary, Bohemia; and even Poland had sent their representatives; and all the languages of Europe migh have been heard; though not a masquerade, all the guests were in costume, the stores of the most famous merchants had yielded their treasures, and the most brilliant costumes were seen flitting through the groves and gardens. The Princess Lobkowitz appeared as a *Georgian slave,* and attracted the admiration *of all, and though often sought as a partner* in the dance, still refused; she was alone in a small bosquetof laurel, when the same Tartar, who had watched over her at the masquerade of the Baroness Teleki, approached and said:

"Fear not princess, all goes well with you."

"You are indeed kind, may I ask to whom I am indebted for this generous protection."

"Protection, Princess, who stands in need of it, surely not you."

The speaker was the Prince of Auersperg, clad as an Italian peasant, a costume which admirably enhanced his manly beauty; bowing low, he further continued:

"I saw you go to the garden, and could not resist the opportunity of following."

"Princess," said the old Baroness Teleki, who had just come up, "will you not join some of our young friends, who are going to dance a Polonaise."

"If I may so far presume," said the count, "will you permit me to be your cavalier?"

"I am sure princess," said the baroness, "you could not be better attended."

"I willingly accept," said the princess, and she soon formed one of the giddy throng, who were whirling through the mazes of that fascinating dance; eight couples stood on the floor, an English sailor, and a Spanish duchess, a Circassian slave and an Italian bandit; the Baroness Teleki, who wore her own attire, escorted by a dashing officer of the Polish lancers; a Swiss in the costume of her native mountains, attended by a Spanish cavalier; the Grand Turk, glittering in diamonds, and with a superb cachmere for a turban, with a Lithuanian burgess' wife; the Emperor Maximilan, and a Flemish peasant; such was the strange medley presented by the dance. The Countess Lingotski, who had wandered by herself, was looking at a bed of roses, and listening to the warbling of the nightingales, when a not unfamiliar voice, accosted her, and glancing in the direction whence it came, saw a negro standing at her side, or at least a person who was painted to imitate one of that unhappy race.

"You may set your mind at rest about that individual, he will never see Madrid again."

"Has he gone?"

"Yes, and in all probability will never return." The countess stooped to gather a rose, which particularly struck her fancy, and when she turned again to speak to her strange companion, he had disappeared. The polonaise was finished, and all the guests were summoned to a game at forfeits, by the host himself, who playfully reproached the Countess Lingotski, because she kept herself so much at a distance.

"We saw your sister star, but you were not here."

"When the Princess Lobkowitz shines, I must be content to keep in the back ground."

"But on this occasion, we cannot permit your ladyship to be so recreant to the duties of society, as to be so long away from the rest of the circle; come let us join them."

The baroness presided as mistress of the revels, supported on either side by one of the youngest and fairest members of the aristocracy; the young lady on her right representing Flora, with white gauze and flowers; the other, on her left, Undine, dressed in a cloud of flowing drapery, and a coronet of shells on her beautifully chiselled brow.

Undine put the first question, and singled out the Prince Auersperg, to whom she put the question.

"Who in this assemblage is the fairest?"

"You have puzzled me, fair sprite of the Danube; in such an assembly, it were hard to answer; please select some one else who has more judgment than I."

"No, no," was the reply, the prince must decide or pay a forfeit."

"Pay the forfeit," exclaimed a thousand voices.

The prince glanced timidly around the circle, and his eye rested for a moment on the Princess Lobkowitz, but still he spoke not.

"You are timid," said the Countess Lingotski.

"Your ladyship will perhaps leave a poor fellow a little time to select where there are so many beauties."

"Oh, prince, you must decide; from so many you can surely make a choice."

"Well, then, I adjudge that you countess, are the wittiest and handsomest woman here," while, at the same time his eye rested on the Princess Lobhowitz, with an expression of the greatest tenderness. This look did not escape the Countess Lingotski, who laughingly said:

"Prince, I know your secret, but shall not betray you."

While this scene was enacted among the guests of the prince, Von Puffengruntz, the steward, and the countess' nurse, were equally assiduous in entertaining the farmers, their wives, and the better sort of the tenantry, who had been freely admitted to their rustic *fete*. In their eyes Von Puffengrutz was one of the greatest men that ever lived; he had the handling of all the count's ducats. He was constantly near him; no one enjoyed his confidence so freely. Next to the count himself, the steward was the most important man on the estate. The table groaned under the most sumptuous rural cheer, huge hams, rounds of beef large enough to feed giants, all the fruits that grew on the estate; sweet cakes, weighing at least twenty pounds each, frosted in white and pink, in the highest style of the confectioner's art, and covered with the armorial bearings and crests of the Palfi; wine and ale were freely dispensed under the supervision of two blushing damsels, to all who chose to partake of them.

Christina presided at one of the tables This worthy personage, forming rather a conspicuous feature in the scene, clad in a dress of faded crimson velvet, which had figured in court balls a century ago, with a long train, a black velvet boddice, heavy gold earrings, and a massive necklace of the same material. She looked somewhat like the dowager countess; she flirted her fan incessantly, though the weather was cool and balmy, and cast the most languishing glances at the steward, whose head was almost turned with the admiration so unceremoniously lavished upon him.

A group of young peasants came up and entreated permission to execute one of their national dances, to which the dame graciously consented. One of these girls, who, gifted with a natural wit, had been closely watching the battery directed against the steward, observed in a loud but distinctly audible voice, "How greatly the ladies that come from Vienna excel those, who are merely country bred; the difference can be seen in every movement. What an air fashion gives!" This speech reached the ears of the person for whom it was intended, who calling her admirer to her side, pointed out the speaker, asked who she was, and craved an introduction.

"It only gives me too much pleasure to comply with any of your requests. You know that here you have only to command, and you shall be obeyed; we are all your vassals."

"Ah, Herr Von Puffengruntz, you are so flattering. You men are so seductive and dangerous, we poor women cannot venture to believe the half that you tell us."

"Rest assured, fair lady, that whatever I say comes from, and I hope, will go straight to the heart."

"If I could only place faith in what you say."

"Place faith in what I say! Good heavens, Madame, do you think that I would trifle with the affections of so amiable and sensitive a nature—"

"You men are all such deceivers," gently sighed out the lady. "But you forget that you have not yet brought up the young woman whom I requested to see."

The steward did as he was requested, and bowing, said:

"Allow me to present Amina Graffenstein to your most gracious notice; the daughter of one of my oldest friends."

This young girl had seen about seventeen summers, and had stolen the tints of the rose and lily. Her dark violet colored eyes shone with fun and mirth, endowed with a keen and natural wit. She readily pierced the mask of the woman before her, who had neither the graces of youth, nor the respect which should invariably be the accompaniment of middle life and old age.

"I am pleased," said Christina to make your acquaintance. I have never before remarked, what a superior person you are, though I was rather struck with your appearance."

"Your ladyship is very kind," said Amina courtesying.

"No, it is you, that are very discerning," replied the dame. "But then talent, you know, is not given to all, it is, to be sure, an undoubted fact, that those who live in cities," and here the speaker drew herself up, and rustled her train, as if saying, "look at me," "have a certain manner, and polish, that can only be acquired by mixing with the best, and most elegant society. But then such people are always disposed to be condescending, and exceedingly polite to those who wish to rise. I am not one, that could have the heart to throw obstacles in the way of such a laudaable purpose. In me, young woman, you will always find a friend. And let me tell you that such articles are scarce in this world."

"I am overwhelmed, with your most gracious condescension."

"True humility is always the accompaniment of merit. I was not deceived in my first opinion of you. But you shall open the ball with the steward; have the kindness Mr. Steward to lead this young lady out."

"Pardon me, Madame, if I disobey you." There is only one person here with whom I care to dance.

"Only one person, Mr. Steward, who is the favored lady?"

"If your heart cannot tell you, I must be silent."

"Ah, Herr von Puffengruntz—"

"Ah, Madame," replied the enamoured steward, "are you blind? Have those charming orbs lost the power of sight? Can you not have noticed?"

"Noticed what?" interrupted Christina with *a coquettish air.*

"Whither my affections have long been tending. But you women are so insensible! Can you not have seen where I have placed my affections? Ah, Madame—"

"Perhaps on Arvena here," was the cool reply. "She is young, and rather pretty."

"Pretty, Madame! The girl, for a young chit, is well enough, but I look higher!"

"Then, Herr von Puffengruntz, "there's old Liza. She is yet strong enough, and I dare swear has saved a score of ducats or so," rejoined Christina, with the most provoking composure, at the same time darting a glance of admiration on a handsome young game keeper, who had long been the object of Von Puffengruntz's aversion, but whom he dared not exclude from the festivities. The steward turned red and frowned. Christina, seeing she had gone too far, said humbly:

"Herr von Puffengruntz, we have distinguished this young woman with our particular favor. Will you not open the ball with her?"

Von Puffengruntz was forced to consent, and he and his rather reluctant partner took their places on the sward.

Christina, thus left at liberty, invited the young keeper to pledge her in a glass of wine. Though not at all smitten, the youth could not venture to disobey, and he finished by asking the lady to favor him with a waltz, to which she gladly consented, and was soon whirling in the midst of a crowd of gaping rustics, who contemplated with open eyes and mouths, the graces of the town bred lady, and vowed that it was the finest thing they ever saw. Von Puffengruntz looked at the pair as they passed gloomily; jealousy was painted in every feature. The lady, all calmness, returned the steward's sinister looks with the most smiling courtesy, while her escort eyed the steward scornfully, and Amina as if he would like to plunge a dagger into her heart. Still Christina was as cool as ice, and conversed coolly with her partner on the most indifferent topics.

"Had he ever been in Vienna, and what did he think of the place?"

"I was there once," was the short reply.

"With how long a stay did you honor the city?"

"I was there about three days."

"What did you think of the ladies? Some say that they are very handsome."

"I did not pay much attention to them."

"I shall arouse his jealousy," was his companion's next idea, "and we shall see whether that will not make him more talkative."

"Amina seems gratified with the attentions that the Herr von Puffengruntz is paying her,

and I tell you what, she might go further and fare worse, Madame."

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say."

"You do not suppose for one moment that Amina—young, gay, and fresh—would marry a man who is so much older?"

"Yes; but look at the money that the steward has, he must by this time have a good round sum of yellow boys."

"And you think that for the sake of the few golden coins that old Von Puffengruntz has piled up in his bags, that the girl would be willing to marry a man who is nearly old enough to be her grandfather?"

"And I can tell you, my young friend, that there are many girls, as young and far handsomer than Amina, who would only be too happy to wed a man who is so well to do as Herr von Puffengruntz. There are plenty such in Vienna, or, for that matter, in all parts of the world; gold chains, big houses, and velvet dresses are not without their attractions."

"Then I wonder, Madame, that you have never changed your condition."

"It has not been for want of offers," was the dame's reply, hidling her head, playing with her fan, and glancing at the grass.

The waltz ended, and the keeper asked his companion if she would not take some refreshment, to which she graciously assented, and this singular couple were soon seated at a small rustic table. Von Puffengruntz, forced to do as much for Amina, was near them, and Christina enjoyed exceedingly the jealous glances he cast from time to time on the game keeper.

"Herr von Puffengruntz?"

"Madame?"

"Will you have the kindness to bring me a slice of cake from the table on the other side; I feel as if I could eat it?"

Von Puffengruntz silently obeyed the request, and placed the delicacy required on the table before the lady.

"Thanks, Herr von Puffengruntz, you have behaved with your usual kindness and gallantry. This cake is excellent, and reflects much credit on the maker; tell her so, with my compliments."

"I seldom go in the kitchen, or interfere in women's matters. I issued my orders, and they were executed. I shall, however, deliver your message."

"Ah, this wine is excellent, and much better than we generally have in Vienna. This, at least, Herr, comes under your province."

This random stroke had some effect. The *estate had long been* celebrated for its vintage, and, to do the old man justice, though at times vain and irritable, he was, taken on the whole, just, humane, and devoted to the interests of his lord, and particularly prided himself on the wines."

"I have done my utmost," was the reply, in a somewhat mollified tone, "to set the best that I could before you."

"We will pledge you in a toast, and all must fill their glasses. Come, partner," said Christina to the gamekeeper, "you shall not be behind, you shall drink as well as the rest."

"What shall the toast be?"

"A speedy husband, and a clever fellow he must be, to my pretty Amina."

"And who shall that husband be?" said Von Puffengruntz.

"Cannot you imagine?"

"There are so many here that would fain carry off such a pearl," Herr said.

"Be it my choice, and I am certain that both parties will be satisfied. Let my former partner here have Amina for his wife."

Both smiled, blushed, but neither dissented from this arrangement.

The steward brightened up, the cloud passed from his face, and he was the life of the company. A party of gypsies coming up at this moment, the steward though usually severe against such vagrants, pressed them to stay, and partake of the good fare; they cheerfully consented, and after they had been regaled to their hearts' content, danced on the lawn for the amusement of the guests; one of them sung a rude song, in which he extolled the hospitality of the noble race to whom the castle belonged, and presenting their tamborine, begged for a gratuity. Some coppers were speedily collected, and when it came to the turn of Christina, she dropped in a small piece of silver; a smiling young woman accosted her with:

"Lady, let me tell your fortune."

"No, no; I do not care to know it."

"Yes, but you don't know what good luck may yet have in store for you."

"I have all I want."

"Don't be too sure of that, there is an old proverb in our tribe, old love burns strong; and he who loves the longest, is sure to conquer in the end; and then your gracious highness well knows, that there are some who never get old."

Soothed by this flattery, Christina yielded her hand, and after the lines had been attentively examined, the fortune teller predicted that she would marry soon and well; and that an old flame, who had long loved her secretly would make propositions for her hand openly, that she was on the high road to for-

tune and preferment, and would soon possess an establishment of her own.

Christina smiled and blushed; Von Puffengruntz looked as if about to make an offer, when the castle clock tolled two, warning the guests that they must part, and the steward was forced to content himself with a tender pressure of the hand, and a soft glance, as he escorted her to the house.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BLACK CROOK VISITS KLEINFELDT.

An artist lives in a perpetual fever, if he acquire any reputation, the public are always expecting great things from him, when perhaps he is not in the mood for work; and then he is sometimes greatly worried by callers, who do not scruple at all moments to trespass on his valuable time.—*Fuseli's Autobiography.*

Kleinfeldt's studio had now become one of the most fashionable resorts of Vienna, as his popularity had greatly increased, since the reader last visited his chamber; all the wits, beauties and statesmen of the empire were anxious of transmitting their features to posterity on the canvass of the artist, who was one of themselves, and to the manor born. Prince Paer still continued Kleinfeldt's most devoted friend, and had latterly sent him some Spanish pictures, from which the artist was to select the one he liked best, and copy it, as the prince wished to bestow it as a wedding gift on a young kinswoman who was shortly to be married. The Spanish picture was on the easel, and the painter was so attentively considering the tints, that he heard nothing till the door was thrown open with a great noise, and he saw the Black Crook contemplating him with an evil eye.

"Ah, Master Kleinfeldt, at last I have caught you at home. Is my picture yet finished?"

"I must crave your pardon," cried Kleinfeldt, "but your picture is not yet finished."

"And may I ask, why not?"

"I have been so busy."

"The usual cant of those who undertake more than they can perform."

"You know that I take many portraits, and that my sitters come as they can; you shall have your picture, do not fear; and then Prince Paer."

"Oh, to the devil with Prince Paer, I will give you as much gold as any lord in Vienna, *but I must have that picture.*"

"*And you shall not be disappointed,*" said the artist, who was anxious to terminate the interview, "but just now:"

"Oh, I understand," said the Black Crook, "you are anxious to get rid of me; it would not do, should any of the fine birds, who waste their own time, and engross yours, for me to be seen lounging in your studio, but I ask as a favor, that you will allow me to see the Venus, and what progress you have made with it. You cannot at least refuse me that."

The artist bowed a sullen assent, and led the way to another chamber, where he showed the adept how far the picture, in which he seemed so greatly interested, had progressed. The subject did not greatly please the artist, and he felt inclined to hand back the money, and leave the picture unfinished: but a sharp look from the adept, warned him that he was dealing with no ordinary person, and that he must be exceedingly circumspect.

The Venus was about half done, the head, neck and bust, were in the finest style of art; the limbs did not quite satisfy the adept, who made some objections, and turned to go, when he was met by a man of about thirty-five, who grasped the Black Crook by the collar, and exclaimed, "at last I have you."

The Black Crook gazed helplessly at his captor, who held him, as if in a vice; escape he could not, and he was dragged down stairs, as helpless as an infant, and placed in a large artist's chair, in the studio, Kleinfeldt following mechanically and anxiously awaiting the denouement of this singular event.

The person who had seized the Black Crook, was, as we have before said, past the first flush of youth; his appearance indicated considerable muscular strength, and his dark eye, blazed with vengeful fires.

"I shall murder you."

"And why," said the artist "do you thus pursue him?"

"I have been on the look out for years, and chance has thrown him in my way today; but I now say, that he shall not escape my just vengeance, miscreant as he is."

"What has he done?"

"Rather ask what crime he has not committed, and then I will tell you; but I hate him most intensely, and now that he is in my power, he shall pay the forfeit of his crime, but hear, and you shall judge."

"Ten years ago I lived in Madrid, I too like yourself am an artist, and could soon earn a modest support. I married a young and beautiful woman, who like myself belonged to the humble classes of life, we lived quietly and were very happy."

"But I did nothing," gasped the Black Crook."

"You did nothing, you have only poisoned a man's life; torn the wife of his bosom from his side, and yet you call that nothing; but you shall hear, and then satisfy yourself, whether I am right or wrong. We were very happy, and my wife apparently had not a desire ungratified, when one day as she was attending mass in the neighboring church, she unfortunately caught the eye of the Duke of Altamira, one of the richest, but at the same time, the most dissipated of all the grandees of Spain; he came to my studio, and I poor fool, suspecting nothing, welcomed him to the best that I had, little dreaming that my ruin and unhappiness were so near."

"But I—

"Silence," exclaimed the stranger, or by the heavens above, I will make you food for the worms, or tear the tongue from your head, if you utter one word more; you have too long polluted the earth with your hateful presence; it is time you should consort with the devils, whose aid you are so constantly invoking; but you will find that I shall be as good as my word, and that you shall not escape me."

"Permit me," said Kleinfeldt, "to intercede in his behalf. He is old; in the course of nature, he cannot live many years."

"Yes," replied the other, "so people said in Madrid, and since then he has lived ten years. For ten years have I pursued that wretch, and if spared, shall pursue him for ten more; if he elude me now, but of which I do not see the slightest chance. I shall continue my story, and woe to you," said he, glancing malignantly at the Black Crook, "if you dare to interrupt me further. As I said before, the Duke of Altamia saw and envied me the possession of my wife; he was a rich lord, a poor painter. He had millions at command, I nothing but my brush; and he was not satisfied till he tore from me the only thing on earth that I prized. Rich jewels and costly stuffs were refused, she could not be tempted; heaps of gold were next offered, but vainly. At last he had recourse to the machinations of this accursed quack, who, for the sake of gold, compounded a philtre of such potency that my wife's affections were stolen from me and fixed on another, and that other was my rival. Nor did the infamous villain stop there. I had some words with the duke in the street, he called me a hound, and added, 'that my wife was handsome; that he had her, and meant to keep her.' Maddened at the taunt, I drew my stiletto, and stabbed him to the heart. I fled from the city, but in the meantime my adversary recovered, and employed yon quack to lay a spell on me. A grievous sickness invaded all my limbs; I did not live, I suffered. To me the balmy air of heaven was full of countless torments; I could scarcely move; the witches, and that confounded quack did it all, and now my hour of vengeance has come, and I shall enjoy it to the full. Of that he shall not balk me; an army should not deter me from my just and full satisfaction."

"Mercy," said the Black Crook.

"Mercy!" said the Spaniard, "prate not to me of mercy. Where is my Isabella, whom you assisted in consigning to the arms of a paramour, who was sated with her in a month. But now my time has come," and as he spoke he seized the adept by the throat, and drawing a stiletto prepared to put him to death.

The adept who had seemed in a sort of a trance, gazed stupidly around him, and could not comprehend what it meant. This, however, lasted but a few moments, and he seemed to have recovered the vigor of his youth; tore himself from the grasp of the Spaniard, and drawing a stiletto put himself on his guard. Again the Spaniard clutched, and again the adept released himself unhurt, though he had wounded his antagonist. The two stood at different corners of the room glancing at each other like fiends, but each was on his guard. At last the Spaniard made a pass at the Black Crook, which he could not ward off, though the Black Crook showed that he was perfect master of fencing; the Spaniard inflicted a severe wound on the Black Crook, who sank fainting to the floor.

The Spaniard gazed at the wounded man in silence, and said, "You will bear me witness, Herr Kleinfeldt," "that the matter has been fairly done, and that I have taken no unjust advantage."

The Black Crook seemed insensible, and after night had set in, was borne to his residence in a litter.

Kleinfeldt, after the Black Crook had been carried to his residence, besought the Spaniard to remain and partake of his hospitality; this kindness was not refused, and after the evening meal had been discussed, and they were once more alone, Kleinfeldt asked his companion what had become of the Spanish grandee who had eloped with his wife, whom he had wounded, and who afterwards recovered?

"For three months," replied the Spaniard, "the physicians despaired of his life, and was equally assidious in asking daily at the palace, after the health of his grace, you may guess for what motive."

"But you did not present yourself in my

a manner, as to be recognized," asked Kleinfeldt.

"No, I assumed various disguises; sometimes I went as a Franciscan friar, upon whose convent the family of Altamira had bestowed large alms; then as an officer in the army, and sometimes as one of his tenants, in the costume of an Andalusian peasant; I never used the same dress twice; at last her ecovered, and went out as usnal, I was careful not to do any thing which might alarm or put him on his guard, so that I suppose, he absolutely forgot there was such a person as myself in existence. Three months thus passed, I had contracted a friendship with his groom, in fact I was then employed as an assistant to a dealer in horses; he lived in the suburbs, and under the disguise I wore, no one would have known me; I heard that the duke wanted some horses brought for his inspection, they were shown up; I saw his groom, asked him to take some wine, he came to my lodging room, coveted a picture I had, of which I begged his acceptance, he kept me constantly informed of all the duke's motions, day by day: I waited, I had trained a horse with such exactness, that the creature knew my footstop, and would neigh at the sound of my voice; one day Francisco told me, that the duke would ride out to his country place, twelve miles distant from the city; that the road was very lonely, that he could not go unattended; "would I go in his stead?" I reigned some other engagement, made a thousand excuses, but finally suffered myself to be persuaded; and at the appointed time, clad in the ducal livery, started behind Altamira; the place was soon reached, the afternoon passed, and at midnight we prepared to return to the city; we mounted our horses, rode about three miles, and as we came to a solitary part of the road; I suddenly reined in my steed, close up to that of the duke, and exclaimed: "My lord repent of your sins, you must die." "Die" exclaimed the affrighted man, "and who are you?" "It matters little, who I am, take your last look of life, for you shall die." I stabbed him twice, but still he was not dead; the horse reeled, but the dying man still kept his seat firm in the saddle; I stabbed him a third time, and ere his spirit quitted its earthly habitation, I whispered in his ear, 'do you remember Isabella, her husband is avenged.' The intelligent and sagacious creature I rode obeying my voice, bore me safely away; I rode many miles before I reached a place of safety; before I left Madrid I had been careful to place a change of clothes in a small bag; I sunk the livery in the river, and disposed of the horse; I wandered over Europe, occasionally toiling at my profession, but oftener idle, till chance brought me to Vienna, and the same blind goddess threw me into connection with the Black Crook. 'With many thanks sir painter for your courteous hospitality, I will trespass on you no longer."

Kleinfeldt was exceedingly touched at the tale he had just heard, and would fain have persuaded the painter to have remained but he declined prolonging his stay; and would only accept a few pieces from a well filled purse forced on him by the generons artist."

The Black Crook was carried to his own residence, and when he arrived, was so faint from loss of blood, that he was almost dead, when conveyed to his chamber; and resolutely refused all offers of medical attendance; when the pain had a little abated, he prescribed for his own ailments, the tongueless negro, and Grepo being his only attendants; all visitors were denied, and informed that Dr. Hertzog had been called on a most important matter to Constantinople, and that his return was uncertain; Barbara and the gypsey called twice, but were not permitted to enter. In a few weeks the Black Crook after having suffered agonies recovered; a slight paleness remaining, showed that he had been seriously indisposed.

CHAPTER XX.

BARBARA AND URSULA, WITH SOME OTHERS, HOLD A CONCLAVE.

Sisters, what shall we do?

Do? we must practice our art. The devil is our master, and will assist us.

Well, we shall compass heaven and earth to accomplish our ends.—"*Witch*," *a Danish Tragedy*.

"Barbara," said Ursula, "whom do you expect here to-night?"

"We must hold that solemn conclave upon which we have long determined. We shall have the negro and the Mexican, our two selves, and the Norwegian witch."

"Be it so. When do you expect them?"

"Every instant."

A rap at the door announced a visitor, and a tall and hideously ugly black, with a flat nose, and immense pendant ears, entered the apartment, who saluted the two females with more courtesy than could have been expected from his uncouth appearance. A light step was heard ascending the stairs, and a small female figure, covered from head to foot, presented herself. Ascertaining that Ursula, Barbara, and the negro were alone, she threw

aside her mantle, and stood clad in the costume of her tribe, holding a small arrow tipped with emeralds, a necklace, coronet, and earrings of the same stones, constituted her ornaments. The Norwegian was the last who came. The negro and the two witches wore the dress of the period, whereas the Norwegian was clad in furs, with a high peaked hat. The Mexican was in the bloom of youth, with soft, melancholy black eyes; the Northern sorceress was tall and ungainly with a profusion of coarse yellow hair, which was scarcely confined by a coronet of common sea shells.

"It is time," said Barbara, after a silence of some moments, "to commence the rites."

Ursula liberated her snakes, and taking one more tame than its companion, twined it round her neck, where, pleased by the warmth, the reptile remained quiescent, glancing about occasionally with its brilliant gem-like eyes.

"Did you receive," said the negro, addressing Barbara, "a case I sent you?"

A reply in the affirmative was given, and a small box was brought in, when the black, after applying a small key, extracted the corpse of a recently deceased child.

"I thought it best," said the negro, in a deep sepulchral voice and a strong guttural intonation, "to commence this evening with the corpse of a child that died a natural death, as the doctor is absent, and as we are not a full assembly. When we meet at the mountain, a living child must be sacrificed."

"Where can we obtain a child?" asked Barbara.

"Be that my task," said the negro. "There is a little boy who daily comes to see me; a few sweetmeats will allure him, and he will soon be ours." The black's repulsive countenance was lighted with a horrid smile.

"I shall construct the altar after the custom of my native land," said the Mexican, who in her fanciful attire, small but exquisite features, and quick, agile motions, seemed rather to be an attendant sprite on Titania than performing such unhallowed rites with such fearful companions.

A small square table was erected in the middle of the apartment, on which the Mexican, with many bows and genuflections, put a small square stone, which had been centuries before the Spanish conquest, which bore stains of human blood, and which had once been part of a teocalli; three skulls were placed in the centre, surmounted by a bouquet of flowers, and skins of snakes, with flat eyes, were suspended from the ceiling. The Mexican, after these arrangements had been made, retired to a distance, and, asking for a little fire, with a measured invocation, covered the whole with the smoke of a fragrant gum; her voice was constantly heard in a low measured musical chant. The Norwegian approached to assist, but was gently, but earnestly, motioned aside; the smoke gradually cleared away, and the Mexican was seen prostrate before the altar. After a moment she rose, and exclaimed with an enthusiasm bordering on madness:

"Mexitli, mighty god of war, and father of the great Mexican nation, I, a stranger and sojourner far from my own flowery land, but even now thy altars have been overthrown and thy shrines desecrated; here, in a foreign country, I do invoke thee! Sisters, and thou brother, join with me."

The four then prostrated themselves, and the Mexican, clothing herself in a short scarlet robe, again incensed the shrine and pronounced that all was ready.

The Norwegian said that she would now invoke the great spirits of the North.

"Frega, dread spirit of the frozen North, thou at whose shrines even now some faithful servants minister, to whom supreme honors are paid in the abodes of the gods, we do beseech thy aid, and in thy honor, chaste goddess, we now offer thee sacrifice of a serpent!"

As she spoke, the sorceress drew from her bosom a snake, and, seizing an ancient knife sacrificial, beheaded the reptile and threw the fragments on the altar. The Mexican, kneeling, was absorbed in devotion.

Next advanced the black. Placing the corpse of the dead infant on the shrine, he waved his hands three times each way, and, bending over, remained with extended hands for half an hour, at the end of which time he exclaimed:

"Spirits of heat and light, thou who hoverest over the Niger, and watchest the destinies of thy children in that great Continent which is sealed to the pale faces, show us thy countenance, accept this sacrifice which we offer, and pour upon the object for whom it is offered thy choicest maledictions! May he after the soul has parted from the body pass through that hell where the serpents forever hiss and sting! May he be tormented with a perpetual thirst! May he cross the lake infested with the crocodiles!"

Taking up the sacrificial knife deposited by the Mexican, he applied it to the jugular vein, caught the blood as it fell in an antique vessel, and, after moving it thrice, emptied it at the four corners.

Barbara then entoned a hymn to the powers of evil, in which the others joined. A pause ensued, in which the hissing of the snakes was distinctly heard. The Mexican, who had been

silent, slowly approached the unhallowed shrine, and extending the corpse, marked out a line above the region of the heart, then using a razor made of the sharp Mexican flint, tore out the heart, and kneeling deposited it all bloody on a small golden plate, which he waved thrice at the four corners of the altar, saying in a low voice, "Great powers of evil, thus do we propitiate thee."

"Now, sisters, and you brother," said Ursula, ere we commence the last rites, is there any one whom you particularly desire to devote to destruction?"

"I know of one," said the Norwegian witch, "whom I desire particularly to plague and vex."

"Why, good sister," croaked out Barbara, "one day he followed me in the street, and called me witch; I am sworn to be revenged."

"You have a sufficient reason, sister," exclaimed all the others.

"Ours is a sacred order, and must be maintained at all risks; all mankind is banded against us, and we are banded against all who injure and oppress us," said Ursula.

"I agree with you," said Barbara, whose eyes sparkled with an unnatural lustre, and enhanced her with withered ugliness to such a degree that even the Mexican, though her soul was deeply tinged with wickedness, shrank appalled from the repulsive countenance of the elder sorceress. The negro, with a hideous grin, extended his hand to the Mexican, and leading her up to the altar; Barbara and the Norwegian next followed, and lastly Ursla, each holding a torch. A quantity of light wood was piled high on the body of the child, grains of rice were scattered over the little corpse, the Norwegian some hair from a tiger's tail, killed in the East as a man eater; Barbara some fragrant herbs, Ursula the fragment of a shark's tooth, and the negro some shavings of the horn of a rhionceros.

"Stay," exclaimed the black, "before we consummate the final rite, I must put obi on that man."

"Obi!" exclaimed the Norwegian.

"Yes, if obi be put upon him he shall never know peace more, nor till the angel of death hover near him, shall he enjoy a sound sleep."

"But now, brother, the rites will be maimed and imperfect. Let us defer that till we meet at the mountain, when the spirits of the mighty dead shall be convened, when great magicians shall again assume flesh, or clad in the shadowy livery which departed spirits adopt, will assist at our deliberations; then brother we will invoke the great resources of our art. Wait till then, and sisters all, treasure up your resentments, for then they shall be freely gratified; sister, then shall be the grand sacrifice; the deities, in whom we believe, relish human blood."

"Yes," said the Mexican, "the gods of the land of heat and sun love blood, and ere the pale faces landed and destroyed the sacred fanes where the tutelary guardians of the Mexicans were worshipped. The great statue of the mighty founder of our race has long been buried, though some are still faithful to the creed of their ancestors. But since you have said it, the grand sacrifice shall not be consummated till we meet at the rock. Let us now proceed to the second part of the rites, or rather sacrifice, and do you, brother, from the land of the sun, and famed for your great knowledge of magic, finish what we have commenced."

The black signified that he would comply with her wishes, and instantly donned a white mantle richly embroidered with gold. A mitre shaped coronet was placed on his brow by the Mexican. Seizing a small hatchet, he decapitated the corpse, and holding up the bleeding head, exclaimed: "Thus, oh bright Aldebaran, who rulest over the stars, I do invoke thee."

Barbara, Ursula, and the Mexican each seized a limb, till nothing but the trunk was left, and dedicated each part to one of the infernal gods. A pyre was then constructed, on which the sacred fragments were placed; sulphur and resin strewed abundantly on the mass, and the whole set on fire. While the wood was blazing, and the flesh consuming, the apartment was filled with an almost intolerable stench. The serpents allured by the heat, crept near the flames and hissed, as if enjoying the warmth.

While the witches and their sable colleague were contemplating the burning pile, the door gently opened, and a young officer in the uniform of the imperial guard entered, and raising his plumed hat was about to speak, when he remained as if spell bound; and some time elapsed ere he found sufficient courage to ask, "What this meant?"

"And who are you," said Barbara, "who dares to invade our holy privacy, when we are engaged in the performance of a sacred duty?"

"Performance of a sacred duty," repeated the officer; "rather let me ask what mean these hellish rites? I shall soon learn," and advancing to the window.

"Stop!" said the Mexican. "He shall not go! If he be permitted to escape, our lives are not worth a second. He must not be permitted to escape!"

"You are right," said the black, and his eyes shone with a sinister light; "he shall

not be allowed to go. The gods have sent him. But stop, I will give him one chance for his life."

Placing himself on the floor, near the serpents, the negro, in a low musical voice, whistled a plaintive melody. At first the creatures paid no attention, but as the tones gradually fell upon their ears, testified the greatest pleasure, executed a variety of evolutions, and, winding themselves round the thighs of the musician, from time to time raised their heads, as if entreating him to continue. Even the special favorite, which was coiled round its mistress' throat, descended from its position and joined its companions. The black, rocking himself to and fro, continued his melody, and the serpents, still further fascinated, wound themselves round his neck. The music stopped, and the snakes were to all appearance dead, and the black quivered and shook as if under the influence of the most terrible emotion.

Again he commenced his chant, in a low key, gradually raising his voice till the apartment resounded as it were with thunder. He ceased as suddenly as he began.

"What do the Fates declare, brother?" interrogated the Norwegian.

"That he must die," was the reply, in a cool and unconcerned manner.

"Is there no hope?" pleaded the officer. "Can gold tempt you? Your secret shall be safely kept."

"And do you imagine," said Ursula, with a tone of derisive mockery, "that the poor and lowly can trust to the promises of the rich and great? You must die!"

A glance around the circle confirmed the last speaker's opinion, and the ill-fated man prepared himself with a short prayer.

"One moment," said the Mexican, "allow me to offer him to the great protector of Mexico, it is so long since he has had a victim, and you know, sisters, that I am a sworn votaress of your order."

"It shall be as you say," said the black, regarding the luckless victim with the most intense hatred, "be it so, sister."

The Mexican, with a look of hellish joy, cleansed the altar from its abominations, placed fresh faggots on the shrine, and drawing from her bosom a small idol, thrice waved it in the air over the officer, and as many times placed it on his brow.

"I must, sisters, quit you for an instant, but will shortly return; meantime carefully guard the sacrifice."

Ten, twenty, minutes, half an hour, elapsed but still the Mexican did not return. This delay was improved by the officer, who again proffered the most enormous bribes to his captors, if they would allow him to escape, but they were as merciless as before.

The Mexican priestess now returned, clad in the full habit of her sacred order. A robe of the brightest scarlet, profusely embroidered with the feathers of the humming-bird, swept the ground; her feet were bare; bangles of the most exquisitely wrought gold, in the form of serpents, clasped her small and well-turned ankles; a zone of the same material ornamented her slender waist; a diamond tiara shone with intense brilliancy, and gems of great value glittered on her hands.

"Are you ready, captive?" asked the Mexican of the officer, in a tone in which pity was blended with firm determination.

"I have no choice."

"Remove, then, your upper clothing, and advance to the altar; the sacrifice will soon be consummated—entreaties are useless—you must die!"

The officer glanced at the door and windows, but seeing no chance of escape, was forced to comply with the demand, and presented himself as she required.

Advancing to the altar, the Mexican seized her victim, and placed him in a convenient position to receive the blow. After drawing a variety of figures on his naked breast, she made a deep incision, and, plunging her hand in the wound, drew out the bleeding and palpitating heart, which she waved three times in the air and then placed it on the altar. The face of the dead man was horribly distorted, as if he had expired in the most fearful agony.

"It is well," said the Mexican, "the souls of my ancestors beckon me from the spirit land, and approve what I have done; now said the Norwegian let the remainder of the body be burned in honor of the Goddess Frega, a fresh pyre was built, on which the body of the unfortunate young man, stripped of his clothing and ornaments, was placed and speedily consumed. The other sorcerers disdained plunder; but Barbara and Ursula, shared his ornaments between them. A magnificent supper provided by the Black Magician concluded the evening; the wine circulated freely, and the enjoyment was prolonged till four, when the Mexican resuming her mantle, and escorted by the negro, slowly wended her way homeward; Barbara and Ursula, after arranging matters, as they were, sought their couches, and did not inspect them till the following day, when Barbara kept a small pair of buttons, and Ursula a diamond ring, both marked with the crest of the family to which he belonged; this matter which was to be fraught with such dangerous consequences afterwards to the witches, was was entirely overlooked.

CHAPTER XXI.

Men are in all ages greedy of gold, and it is with some such a passion, that they will sacrifice their very souls to heap-up gold in their coffers, which too frequently they have not the heart to use, and which is often bequeathed to public charities; their children wish them dead; and when they are safely under ground, hasten to spend the treasures, which have been so carefully amassed. These men have but one God, and at that shrine they kneel, with an Eastern idolatry; their idol is gold. —*Clarendon.*

The Black Crook gazed long and earnestly in the residuum left, from his last operations in the laboratory; and again applied the usual tests, but something was wanting, and it was not the precious metal so eagerly prized by the greater part of mankind, whether savage or civilized; whether idiots or with gigantic intellects; and the adept was at a loss; the works of the most ancient chemists and leeches learned in the law of physics, as then understood, had been deeply read, and all their injunctions carefully practiced, but still the result was an utter and absolute failure, and the alchemist could not disguise that fact from himself; plunged in these disagreeable reflections, his meditations were interrupted by the entrance of the negro, who making his customary salaam, folded his arms, and awaited orders.

"Some one wishes to see me?"

"Yes."

"A man or woman?"

"Woman."

"Who is she."

No answer, the Black Crook again repeated the question, but the negro as before, made no sign; the Black Crook irritated at his silence. raised his cane threatingly, the black cowed and signified that he thought his master would not wish to see her.

"Well, show her in, at all hazards."

A woman in the humbler class of life advanced to meet the adept, who was standing in the centre of the apartment, and dropping a low courtesy, said:

"I thought, worthy doctor, that as I had some curious books for sale, I could not offer them to any one, who would be more likely to purchase them than yourself."

"Let me look at them."

The woman unpacked a small basket, and handed three books to the adept; the first a volume of Monkish legends, coarsely printed, and as coarsely illustrated, was thrown carelessly aside; the second on methematics, met a similar fate, but the third, a treatise on magic, which he had never before seen, was eagerly examined and purchased, at the seller's price; page after page was devoured, and midnight rang out, ere the Black Crook had finished his studies a vision dwaned on his soul; gold, glittering precious gold, danced before his eyes; at last he seemed on the point of realizing his wishes; he returned to his chamber, but still the vision pursued him; still the same feverish idea haunted him; unable to rest, he rose from his couch, and lighting a wax taper, wrote for several hours in a small MSS. book, which was always under lock and key; as soon as the morning meal was dispatched, the adept resumed his studies of the previous night, and his eye lit on the following passage:

"The devil when properly interrogated, will appear, and when he does so come, will refuse nothing to his faithful followers."

"Will refuse nothing to his faithful followers, pondered the adept, and what can he want in return, what have I to give; but whatever he can possibly ask, shall be cheerfully given."

Some persons called in the course of the day, and were received, the business transacted, and then dismissed in as short a time as civility would permit; the perusal of the famous volume was resumed after nightfall, and not interrupted till midnight.

The next day Grepo was summoned and desired to procure a coach, but with all imaginable secrecy, and to have the vehicle at the door at nightfall.

"And whither are you going, master?"

"That is a matter of little consequence to you; but I want you to be silent, or else—"

Grepo, well knew what the Black Crook meant, was silent, and hazarded no further questions.

The carriage stood at the door at the appointed time. The adept accompanied by the dwarf entered, and was soon driven off. Two hours of rapid travelling brought them to a modest inn where they alighted, and the adept at once ordered some refreshment for himself and his attendant, and after the fragments of the meal and the table equipage had been removed, opened a small case, some paper and a set of instruments; carefully cleaning these latter, he drew a number of diagrams on the paper, and made some calculations. These last he repeated till satisfied of their correctness, and then said, "It shall be done;" and as he was exhausted with his journey, and the want of sleep on the night previous, summoned the dwarf to watch his slumbers, and composed himself to rest

The next day was bright and beautiful, all nature seemed to have put on her festal array,

the air was heavy with the sighs of flowers. Attended by the negro, the Black Crook perambulated the streets of the little village. His mere appearance excited the greatest wonder, not unmixed with horror. Some drew aside and crossed themselves with fear and trembling—a glance from the adept's eagle eye was enough to make the boldest quake. The day passed heavily, and the hours lagged fearfully. Time, in the opinion of the adept, stood still.

Night at length arrived, and precisely as the church clock struck ten, the adept, with his invariable companion the dwarf, stood at the entrance of a small but richly wooded dell, which was enclosed on all sides by frowning rocks. A deep and rather sullen stream ran near, and the monotonous ripple of its waves was the only sound that broke the silence; the night birds flitted to and fro, but their soft wings scarcely made any noice.

Striking a light, the adept with a bare head and with great agitation of manner, invited all the spirits of evil to assist him. Then kindling a torch he uttered a long adjuration in an unknown tongue, and awaited the result. The ranquillity which before reigned was disturbed by a noise resembling a thousand chariots rushing over a roughly paved street. The air was darkened by clouds of bats and ravens, which floated over the heads of the Black Crook and his attendant; strange voices and peals of the most hellish laughter were heard; albeit a man of nerve, and used to scenes of terror and fright, these sounds had a powerful effect on the adept, the perspiration stood in large drops on his brow, his jaws quivered convulsively, and his knees refused to support him. With difficulty staggering to a tree, he maintained an upright position; flashes of the most vivid lightning almost blinded him, and the sound of the distant thunder was distinctly heard. The dwarf rolled on the ground in an agony of terror, and by many a mute gesture implored his master to permit him to retire.

"Peace, fool," was the indignant answer, "you shall not interfere thus, you shall stay."

A terrific howling arrested the adept's attention from the dwarf, and he saw two terrific monsters with the shape of dragons, the horns of cows, and the tails of crocodiles, whose open mouths disclosed rows of sharp and saw-like teeth, and exhaled the vilest odors of sulphur and brimstone. These abominable creatures leaped, howled, and poisoned the air in their vicinity; the Crook roared fearfully, and a deep voice exclaimed, "What is needed?" The Black Crook glanced round, but could see nothing; the earth opened *and three skeletons,* wagging their fleshless *chaps in a species of* infernal merriment, stood in the background. Next followed four ghosts, clad in their livery of the grave, who noiselessly moved to their appointed places, and with bowed heads and extended hands, remained motionless. The adept gazed upon these fearful spectres, as if his eyeballs would crack, and yet was charmed by a horrible fascination; the father of evil was fast winding him in a net, from which he felt it impossible to disentangle himself.

A terrific noice, as if the world had suddenly slipped from its axis, 'and chaos had come again,' announced the arrival of the master fiend Flames of fire sprang up around him, a ghostly crown encircled his brow, a trident was grasped in his right hand, three skeletons were seen in the distance, and some meagre figures, with winding-sheets, stationed themselves near his satanic majesty.

"Rash mortal!" exclaimed a harsh voice, "who are you?"

"My name is Wolfgang Hertzog."

"What would you ask of me?"

"To love, serve, honor, and obey you."

"And what shall I give you in return?"

"Gold."

"I will tell you who I am. My name is Lucifer. I once was the leader of the angelic choirs, and basked in the sunshine of the Almighty's favor, now I groan forever in the caverns of the earth, unless when summoned to execute some unhallowed requests. But you will permit me to introduce some of this goodly company, who will hereafter be your inseparable companions. Remember, I tell you before the compact is made."

The adept bowed assent.

"The two creatures at your feet were men who, when on earth, committed the crime of parricide; the three skeletons are the bones of those who, while in the flesh, were remarkable for their love of money, and who, even after death, are not allowed to rest, but constantly visit the scenes of their former labors, and never repose; the sheeted ghosts are the representatives of the sensual, they, like the misers, wander continually, and have no rest; those who are near me are war, ambition, covetousness, pride, rapine, famine and disease—my invariable attendants—but they are, as you see, either dry bones or impalpable shades. Are you satisfied with your companions, for, remember, you will eventually be one of these shades. Pause and reflect, ere it be too late."

The Black Crook surveyed the fearful assemblage he had convened, and even he was staggered at the idea of holding converse with such demons, but the devil prevailed, and he said:

"I will do what you require."

"Kneel down and kiss my hand."

As the adept obeyed and saluted the hand extended, as a sign of his subjection; sounds of the most infernal merriment greeted his ears on all sides. The glade was peopled with fiends of every size and color—some who were so minute that they could scarcely be seen—danced in rings on the sward; "black spirits and white, red spirits and gray" joined hands and executed the most infernal gambols; the spirits of the air, of the vasty deep, and of the recesses under the earth joined in a sort of hellish hilarity; female fiends, with their "foul and sluttish hair" tied in elf locks, waltzed with the ghosts of murderers; headless corpses started from the field of battle; Tartarus sent her representative, and even Charon, the grim ferryman of the infernal regions, after a repose of so many centuries, condescended to grace the festivities.

As the Black Crook cast an eye on the vast assemblage which tenanted the little glade almost to suffocation, there appeared the Borgias, who recounted how many they had sent to the infernal regions, and what a score of assassins they had entertained and kept in their pay; then came a tall pale old man, who, though long since gathered to the world of spirits, was permitted to appear as if in the flesh, who had great beauty of mein, but whose expression was satanical, and who was known in the history of his time as one who set at naught all laws both human and divine, and who worshipped gold with all the fervor of a devotee of Juggernaut; this man, or rather disembodied spirit, was Cenci, the father of the beautiful and unfortunate Roman, Beatrice Cenci, whose name will live forever in the verse of Shelley and on the immortal canvas of the prince of Italian painters: next followed a train of Egyptian and Persian sorcerers, who, joining hands, confessed that they had been actuated by the same spirit, that they had cut off countless persons in the very flower of their youth, "that they had taken them with all their sins broad blown as flush May," and sent them to their final reckoning, "with all their imperfections on their head;" next followed a train of historic personages, Richard the Third, Henry the Eighth, the subtile, intriguing Catharine de Medici, Nero, the cruel Emperor of Rome, and Herod, the King of Judea, who, in his terror of the infant Redeemer, slaughtered all the innocents. These, as they passed before the Black Crook, all made him a mocking courtesy, and hailed him as a brother. All wore crowns, and their *trains were held by the* shadows of pages—every countenance was marked with the blackest despair.

The Black Crook stood aside, and, as they defiled before him, surveyed the infernal assembly. A light touch aroused him, and, turning, he beheld a fair woman, with a crown, who, bowing, said:

"Are you still living, or a shade?"

"I am still breathing. And you—"

"I was the Queen of Naples, but after I had dispatched my husband, I was myself strangled; but I was too early ruined by a worthless woman, and it is but a small part of my punishment when I think what I might have been."

A church bell rang out a chime in honor of a saint, and the whole assembly, as if struck by thunder, disappeared, the glen was quiet, and the chief fiend alone remained in the guise of a Spanish cavalier.

"You have now seen," said he, in a tone of seducing sweetness, "the select of the earth who have owned my sway, but I tell you that in this life they had all they desired—wealth, honors, and titles flowed in on them. The kings and princes of the earth have been my most faithful servants. Are you prepared to obey me?"

"I am."

"You will, then, declare yourself my true, faithful, and devoted servant, loyal to me and me only?"

"I will."

Stamping on the earth, a figure appeared, arrayed in the full garb of an Archbishop.

"This," said the fiend, "was in his lifetime the Archbishop of Toledo, and a Cardinal of the holy Roman conclave, but love of money has brought his eminence to the condition you see. Your grace will be witness that this worthy doctor, Wolfgang Hertzog, vows to be my servant and slave, here and hereafter."

"I promise," said the Black Crook.

"Your grace," said the arch fiend, "will be so kind as to act as scribe, and draw up a bond with your customary neatness. It will not be the first time that your grace has so served me, both in the flesh and since you left it."

The shade vanished, and after a short time re-appeared with the parchment, which read as follows:

"Know all men, in the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, that I, Wolfgang Hertzog, am now a sworn servant of Lucifer, Prince of Darkness, and lord of the infernal regions, that I will at all times, and under all circumstances, obey the behests of the said Lucifer, Prince of Darkness, and lord of the infernal regions."

Shouts of suppressed laughter, loud whispers, and groans were distinctly heard, and for a moment staggered the constancy and resolution of the adept, but the thought of the gold and the power he should acquire over mankind proved stronger than his first intention, and he signified to Lucifer to proceed. When the instrument was finally concluded, the Black Crook signified his willingness to abide by it, and execute it faithfully according to his intelligence and capacity. A moment's deliberation, and the Black Crook deliberately signed the document, which was duly attested by the defunct Archbishop. Lucifer then placed a heavy purse of gold in his hand and informed him that, whenever summoned, he would not fail to appear, and added, "that the honors, dignities, and titles of this world are for my children. Farewell!" and, lifting his hat with a courtly bow, the Prince of Darkness and his ghostly secretary vanished.

The day broke, the rising sun gilded the tops of the nearest trees, and rested lovingly on the distant mountains; still the adept lingered at the scene of the last night's ghostly revelry; rubbing his eyes, he could scarcely believe that all had not been a dream—but the purse of gold was there, and convinced him that what had passed was a substantial reality, and not a mere empty vision.

Returning to the inn, he made a memorandum of the occurrences of the past night; and hiring a coach drawn by Spanish mules, returned to the city, where he was received by Grepo, who looked inquisitively, but did not dare to ask any questions, as he felt from his master's looks that he was treading on delicate ground.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

Nothing in life clings with such force, as a mother's love, the child may be ungrateful, but still the affection of the mother is undying; the child's ingratitude may break her heart, but she will love to the last.—*La Bruyere.*

"Has the young Count Julius come in yet," asked the Countess Feltner of her abigail.

"No my lady, he has not yet returned."

"How long has it been since he was absent."

"Three days; I have counted the minutes. Fly, Justine, I think that I hear the bell."

The wretched mother paced the room three whole days, and no news from her boy; he *who had been so punctual*, oh what could the matter be; where was her boy. A bright idea struck the countess; perhaps the Count Julius, who was rather hasty, had given some offence to his commanding officer, if so she would rely on the friendship of her old friend, the Archduke Louis, who was the commander-in-chief of the forces; she would instantly call on him; ringing the bell, she ordered her coach, and was driven as rapidly as the old coach horses, and the veteran coachman would permit; the general-in-chief when he heard that the Countess Feltner was below, hastened to the vehicle, and wrote a note to the colonel of the young count's regiment, begging that if the lieutenant had been guilty of any act of insubordination, he would be graciously pleased to excuse it. Armed with this missive, the countess drove at once to the headquarters, and asked the sentry, who paid her the honors due to the widow of a general officer, whether he had seen Lieutenant Feltner, and received a reply in the negative. The colonel could give no information, about his young subaltern officer, but remembered that he had started to visit a sick sergeant, of his company, Karl Helmfrecht, who lived unfortunately next door to the witches.

The countess immediately drove thither, and was at once informed by one of the neighbors, of the exact residence and number of Helmfrecht.

Karl, who knew by sight, the mother of his lieutenant, made the proper military salute, and waited in deferential silence, till he should be questioned.

"Have you seen the count, yesterday or today?"

"No, your gracious ladyship, the young count is extremely kind to all his men, and when he heard that I was sick, he started, so I am told, to come and see me."

"And he was not here?"

"No madam."

"Who told him that you were ill?"

"I do not know."

The wretched mother was still at fault, and in her intense agony, repaired at once to the commissary of police, but who unfortunately was not at home; the countess left a note requesting the chief of the police to call on her at once, on business of the greatest consequence.

The summons was promptly obeyed, and the head of the department, who was very astute, waited on the countess, and gathered all the particulars, where the young count had been. He went to the barracks, and had not returned; in fact, he had not been seen since he left the barracks, where could he have gone.

Such was the sum of the information gained by the Intendant of the city, but though astute and exceedingly skillful in putting facts together, he could gather no more; it happened that the old bird fancier had been absent and left the door open, and the young lieutenant had mounted the stair case, in the hopes of ascertaining the residence of his sergeant, but never returned alive; the night was dark, and as the officer was enveloped in his cloak, he had not been noticed; the the chief of the police was not satisfied, till he had visited all the houses in the vicinity of the sergeant; the old man who resided below, was interrogated, and truthfully declared, that he had neither seen nor heard of the young lieutenant; his questioner thought for a moment, and then asked:

"Who occupies the upper floor?"

"Two women."

"Who are they?"

"Their names were told."

"What are their occupations?"

"I cannot tell."

"What kind of a character do they bear?"

The old man was puzzled, he had no very good opinion of his neighbors, and yet he could not tell on what it was based; they had given him no trouble, and he was silent. The question was repeated, and the old man finally replied, "I know nothing whatever about them." His countenance belied what he said, and the acute official saw at a glance that the old man entertained suspicions, but yet on what they were grounded he could not say.

The official determined at once to pay a visit to Barbara and Ursula. The day was already far advanced, and the two women were sitting at the windows when the official entered, without the ceremony of rapping. Ursula, who was exceedingly acute, suspected that this was a visit of inquiry connected with the disappearance of the man whose murder she had witnessed, and rising confronted the officer; she well knew that no proof could be traced there.

"Do you know the sergeant who lives in the next house?"

"I have a slight acquaintance with him; I know him by sight."

"Has he ever been here?"

"Never."

"Have you been there since his sickness?"

"I was never in his house on any occasion whatever."

"Was any one here, say about four nights ago, who was inquiring about your neighbor, the sergeant?"

"No one was here inquiring about any such person. Had such a question been put to me I could readily have answered it, as I knew that the bird fancier had gone out." The woman was cool, determined and exceedingly self-confident; all the questions put were answered sincerely and honestly, and strange as it may appear, with the most perfect truthfulness.

The reader may remember that the lieutenant had entered the apartment, and was so perfectly horror stricken with what he saw that he could not move for an instant, and then he rushed to the windows to invite the aid of the law. He did not disclose his rank or purpose in visiting the neighborhood. Barbara was fearfully agitated, but as the room was darkened, and Ursula did not offer to strike a light, her confusion was unnoticed, and her companion, acting as spokes-woman, she was enabled to collect her thoughts, ere she was addressed by the officer with the question:

"Did you see or hear of any one asking for the sergeant?"

"I did not."

The official was at a loss and knew not what to do, unfounded suspicions floated through his brain, and yet he was confident that they had not both told the truth, and that they knew more than they chose to tell; still there was nothing that could warrant their arrest and detention. He had no further pretext to linger, and dissatisfied with the result of his mission, departed: the moment the sound of his footsteps died away, Barbara turned to Ursula and said:

"I am frightened almost to death."

"Frightened! what have you to fear; are not the others as much concerned as we? Did not the Mexican, the Norwegian, and the negro cause his death as much as we? If there be any murder, we, at least, are not guilty. The Mexican killed him, and the black counselled it; but hold your tongue, and all will yet go well."

"But if they should make a search, they would be sure to find the clothes, and then—"

"And then we shall baffle them, for this very day I shall destroy all the clothes, the Jews shall not have them, they might betray us; come let us set to work about it at once."

"What have we for dinner?"

"What a question!"

"But tell me, as I did not ask it without a motive."

"A little mutton."

"We will stew it; and, stay, as I am going to market, I will get a head or so of garlic—you like it and so do I."

Ursula was not particularly fond of garlic, but as she knew that that plant when cooking exhaled a particular odor, that she could at the same time burn the clothing, and that

the scent of the garlic would overpower the smell of the burning wool. Fearing to trust Barbara alone, she hurried to the market, purchased what she required, returned as speedily as possible, and on entering the house asked:

"Has any one been here?"

"Not a creature."

"Then let us begin at once with the clothing," and, suiting the action to the word, Ursula tore the entire wardrobe of the luckless count into shreds, and threw them on the fire in small handsful.

The ruse succeeded. The bird fancier came up, and asked in a voice of thunder:

"What, in the name of all the gods, do you mean by the poisonous odor with which you fill the house? Do you mean to ruin me, and destroy all my birds?"

"I am sorry," said Ursula, blandly, "that "that I have displeased you; you know that it is impossible to do without eating."

"Yes, but you need not have such ill-smelling compounds. Do you want to kill both man and beast."

"I will try," said Barbara, "not to offend you, but—"

"Well, I suppose," said the bird fancier, "that it must go for this time. Good bye, neighbors."

"Good bye," replied Ursula, with the greatest civility.

She was in the highest possible spirits, as she knew that her stratagem had succeeded.

"Now, Barbara, keep a still tongue, and all will do. I remember well, when I was in prison, they could not convict me; there was no proof against me, and I was wise enough to hold my tongue."

The Commissary of the Police went to the Minister of Justice and disclosed all that he knew; that the young count had gone out, and never returned, and no trace of him had been yet discovered. Bill sticking was not known in those days, but the Minister offered a reward of three hundred golden ducats to any one who could give any information about the sudden disappearance of the young count; to this the countess added a similar amount, and the most active emissaries were employed. Three weeks passed thus, but uselessly; no traces could be found. The distracted mother sat the image of speechless woe, refused to eat, and was inconsolable; the most eminent medical men were consulted, and virtually exclaimed, with the physician of Macbeth, "that the patient must minister to himself." Death, with his sable wings, was hovering near, and, at the end of a week, the countess *was no more.*

The vast and stupendous cathedral of St. Stephen was hung with black, the organ sent forth its most dismal tones, a select choir chanted the famous Dies Iræ; the Archbishop of Vienna, with a gorgeous train of attendants, "sang Mass for the parted soul," and the holy fane was crowded with the elite of the empire; warriors who had gathered laurels on the battle field, men who had grown gray in the service of the State—but all was of no avail; the poor mother had pined away for her boy, and not all the attendance of kings and nobles that the world ever boasted could soothe one pang, or recall the soul to the tenement from which it had forever fled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Look you, this young man is a perfect spendthrift; had he the wealth of the Indies, it would soon be scattered. He has no idea of keeping money.

Isidora. How does he spend it?

Pedro. In every manner possible. If he goes to a goldsmith, he will buy me straight a ring or chain that will cost some ten or more scores of ducats; as to perfumes, the ladies of the Grand Turk's seraglio are not more extravagant; and then he always has a host of parasites, who cling closely to him for their food and drink; men about town, who have much ado to get a decent doublet, or a pair of trunk hose, and yet these fellows boast of their blood, and brag of their pretensions.

Isidora. But how do the father and son agree?

Pedro. They don't agree at all; the son wants money all the time, which his father is none too willing to give him; I believe on my soul, that my young master would like to see the old lord dead.—*Miser.*

The Black Crook had returned to Vienna, and was in the full practice of his nefarious profession, crowds daily flocked to him of all ranks, and the hardly earned coin of the poor chambermaid reposed side by side in his purse with the heavy gold pieces of the count's lady. Fortune had at last smiled on him and he feared nothing; yes, there was one indefinable dread which he could not banish from his mind. Lucifer had indeed promised him all that he desired; gold accumulated in such quantities that even his inordinate avarice was almost satisfied, but yet length of days had not been even mentioned. While in this state of mind he sauntered in the library of Vienna, and saw a Hebrew Bible of great antiquity and value; the adept, who was an excellent judge of such matters, praised the book highly. The librarian showed him a MSS., which had just been

received from one of the Eastern convents of Syria. The Black Crook opened the scroll, and saw these terrible words, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." He trembled like an aspen leaf, laid down the fearful MSS. and quickly left the building.

While sitting in his library, buried in gloomy reflections, he heard a coach drive up to his door and then stop. The despondency vanished, his countenance lighted up, he was once more easy; but it would not do for him to be in a hurry. Two young men alighted from the vehicle and craved admission to the Black Crook. The negro acquainted his master that some persons desired an audience, and the Black Crook gave orders that they should be admitted. The adept received his clients with a suavity which they little expected, and pointing to chairs, requested that they would be seated. His new visitors were both young men; the elder of the two was scarcely more than twenty-five. Both were richly clad, and both had the broken down air caused by dissipation and late hours.

"Dr. Hertzog," said the eldest, "I want a specimen of your skill; I am placed in such a predicament that I care not what I do."

"It would be better," replied the adept, "that this interview should be private; I am not accustomed to speak freely in the presence of others; the gentleman must withdraw, it is imperatively necessary."

"Auguste," said the elder, "we must comply with the wishes of Dr. Hertzog." The young man bowed and re'ired.

"Now doctor, as I said before, I want a trial of your skill."

"In what respect?"

"I wish to know how soon I shall come in the possession of my ancestral estates?—"

"Or to speak more plainly, you are desirous of knowing how long your father will last, ere you can come into the possession of his wealth."

"You have spared me the necessity of explaining myself more fully."

"Perhaps you will pardon my impertinence, but I must know all. Is your father disposed to be liberal, and does he keep you well supplied with cash?"

"Well supplied with cash! you are surely dreaming, doctor. There is not a more avaricious hound in any part of the Austrian empire, I care not who the other may be, or where he lives, than the right honorable, and the most noble the Prince Von Pufflingen."

"The Prince Von Pufflingen!" exclaimed the Black Crook, in a tone of the most unbounded surprise, "he is one of the richest nobles in Europe; his mines alone must yield him a princely revenue."

"Yes, you are right, but when the ducats are paid into the treasury of the Prince Von Pufflingen, he is so fond of them, that he rarely permits them to see the light of day again, unless the person who wants a temporary use of them is willing to pay handsomely for the accommodation. My father loves money intensely; he does not seem disposed to part with any of his gold, and I want it."

"Are you prepared to go all lengths?"

"I will speak plainly, I do not love my father, and I care not how soon he is under the sod."

"I can work a spell, which will insure his destruction, but it will be exceedingly expensive."

"What will it cost?

"Five thousand ducats."

"Five thousand ducats," repeated the astonished client.

"Not a stiver less."

"If that sum be brought, I will undertake it."

"I will bring it you at once, or say in a few hours; I know a Jew who will let me have the money, at an advance of a hundred per cent."

Three hours elapsed, and the young man returned, with a heavy bag, which he delivered to the Black Crook, with these words.

"You will find in this bag, the sum you have demanded."

The adept received the bag with a trembling hand, eagerly reckoned the contents, and told the prince, that all was right.

"When can I know positively?"

"In about three weeks."

"Not before?"

"I will promise you positively then," said the adept, intending to summon the infernal crew whom he always consulted on such emergencies.

Von Pufflingen, without further ceremony, departed.

Grepo was summoned to his masters presence and desired to inform Ursula, Barbara and the confederates, that the Black Crook desired them to meet him at a certain place, which he would hereafter designate; the mission was promptly exented, for as we have seen, Grepo had no great love for the society of Ursula, and her associates.

The following day, the Black Crook and the negro in a heavy coach, repaired to the little villiage, where he had before passed a few days; he arrived shortly before nightfall, and shutting himself in his apartment, refused to

see any one; ten o'clock struck, and the adept and negro sought the glade, where they had had the first interview with Lucifer. The little dell presen ted an aspect of quiet loveliness, which might have seduced the most ambitious, and worldly minded to repose; the water rippled softly, and the wind made melancholy music, as it gently sighed through the trees.

The adept knelt down, and repeated the invocation, the earth opened, and Lucifer appeared in the habit of a Turkish sultan, attend by his ghostly secretary.

"What would you with me, Wolfgang Hertzog?"

"I would fain ask you," was the trembling reply, "whether the spell that I propose making, against the Prince Pufflingen, will be of any avail."

"That will depend on what you use to propitiate the powers of evil, what is it that is wanted?"

"A young man, the son of an avaricious father, is desirous of touching the ducats, that his father hoards so carefully."

"But when the son gets them, how will they be spent;"

"That does not come within the province of my art."

"Then I will tell you," said Lucifer, "all men have their god, the old man loves gold, with all the powers of his soul, the young one, courts what he calls pleasure, but what in reality will cause him pain. Both will eventually be mine; but Herr Hertzog, you have only seen the worst side of my dominions; permit me to show you my power over the demons of the air; you have seen me pass in review, the great of the earth, who are tenants of my kingdom, but where crowns and sceptres will avail but little; now we shall see what my art will do: "attend me ye spirits of the air; the stars shone with more than their usual radiance, and a pearl car was distinctly seen passing through the blue, in which were seated three fairy-like being with silver wings, surrounded by a rosy halo.

"How beautiful," exclaimed the Black Crook.

"There," pursued Lucifer, "are the fiends of malice, envy and detraction, who assume these forms, to lure men to destruction; few in this world can escape their sting, they are among my most potent auxiliaries; three cars, one composed of an entire ruby, another of a diamond, and the third of an opal, which emitted the most vivid flashes of fire, slowly sailed through the air, and at a signal from Lucifer, suspended their progress.

The adept again was charmed.

"These," said Lucifer, "are the different passions convulsing the heart of man; they are as numberless as the sands of the sea, as countless as the hairs of your head—and from these, none, not even the wisest and best are exempt. But I bid ye all appear. Why come ye not at my command?" said the Prince of Darkness, impatiently waving his scimitar.

The air was filled with floating forms of the most ravishing beauty; flowers of the most gorgeous hues and fragrant odors sprang up, as if by magic; colossal tulips, rivalling the setting sun in the brightness of their colors, and far surpassing the puny denizens of the garden, unfolded their huge calixes; and nymphs emerged. Strains of the most exquisite music stole upon the ear, and lulled the soul to a kind of forgetfulness.

"Such is my kingdom; but you only see the exterior. Remember you are mine—you cannot, you shall not, escape me! Pain, incessant grief, and perpetual sorrow inhabit the bosoms of the phantoms you see before you; but I see by your countenance that you wish to speak to me. What is it?"

"How long shall I live?" faltered out the adept.

"How long shall you live?" said Lucifer; it is not given to me to know. I have the art of luring souls to destruction, but I can neither give peace nor length of days—those belong to the Omnipotent, and he delegates his power to no one here below. I did not make that bargain with you how long you were to live, but banish all such unpleasant thoughts, and see what I have contrived for your amusement. Come, my beauties, let us have a dance."

Obedient to the word, the spirits of the air descended to the earth, the waters of the brook yielded their inmates; strains of the most seducing melody enraptured the senses, and a most delicious perfume was wafted to the nostrils of the Black Crook. The negro testified his delight by a variety of uncouth antics, and repeatedly pulled his master's cloak, as if to invite him to share his pleasure.

Lucifer again waved his scimitar, the spirits vanished, and he, his secretary, and the Black Crook were again alone.

"All you desire shall be executed, but I cannot guard against unforseen accidents; farewell. The morning approaches, when I shall hear the sound of the church bells, and they are insupportable to me." With these last words the Prince of Darkness melted into thin air, and was soon lost to mortal view.

For two hours did the Black Crook remain seated on the sward; Aurora had opened the gates of the morning, and the merry carols of

the birds, as they greeted the rising sun, reminded the adept that he must soon quit the place where he had witnessed such wonders. His mind was filled with strange forebodings, he dreaded evil, and could not tell from what quarter it would come; he had indeed gold, but content was more than ever a stranger to his bosom. He returned to Vienna, and found that the witches and the negro would attend his summons as he desired.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

MEETING OF THE WITCHES.

"It was indeed a lovely spot, and nature seemed to have exhausted herself in the beauties she had so lavishly bestowed every tint and variety of shade were to be seen."—*Spanish Father.*

The time arrived when the witches would hold their meeting, and the place they had selected was worthy of a better object. It was a beautifully wooded knoll, with trees all round. The Norwegian, Mexican, Ursula, Barbara, and the Black Crook, the negro alone was absent.

"He should be here by this time," said Barbara, who glanced uneasily around, as if expecting that some one would interrupt their proceedings. Her fears were groundless, the negro soon joined them, leading a little boy in his hand, who by the side of his dusky guide, appeared like morning led by night.

"At last we shall begin," said Barbara, "and this is the first regular meeting we have had for years, where we were enabled to offer a proper sacrifice."

"You forget the other night," said the Norwegian.

"That," said the Mexican," was my sacrifice, and no one shall with my consent, rob the great Mexitli of his just due."

Ursula glanced with some pity on the fair haired child, who looked at the motly assemblage, by whom he was surrounded, with an air of innocent wonder.

"Let the altar be erected," said Barbara, with an air of stern determination, addressing the Black Crook.

The adept nodded assent, and a quantity of stones gathered from all sides were speedily piled in a rude structure.

"Now" said Ursula, "summon the spirits of our sisters, who are wont to assist at these sacrifices."

All clapsed their hands, and commenced a lugubrious chant; the spirit of frenzy seemed to possess the four witches. Barbara's. grey hair, escaping from its confinement, streamed over her shoulders, and her eye gleamed with the fire of insanity.

"Sisters," said the Norwegian, "we must summon the spirits, and drawing from her bosom, a roll of hair, she applied a slow match, and the air was darkened by a dense smoke, terrific noises were heard, and the little area was soon peopled with monsters more hideous than even Fuseli's imagination ever transferred to canvas. Women or shades, decripit with age, with visages seamed with at hous-and wrinkles, mounted on double headed elephants, others on broomsticks, some minus an arm, others wanting a leg; monsters with heads, nondescripts with human heads, and the extremities of animals; and others young fair and beautiful, clad in gauze, and glittering with gems, but all actuated by the same infernal spirit, and all saluting the Black Crook as their friend and master.

"I thank you, friends," said the Black Crook, "for your attendance, a mighty deed is to be done to night, blood, human blood is to be shed; a young and innocent child, who has never yet known sin, is about to spill his blood for the good cause; and then to such as are still in the flesh, I can promise gold."

"Gold," howled one of the most hideous of the infernal assemblage, "it consigned me to the three powers of evil."

"Gold," murmured one of the fairies, "it was my bane."

"But let us have some refreshment," said the Black Crook, and he instantly commanded some unknown servitors to spread a table; which rose at his bidding; the red wine flowed, and the monsters pledged each other in brimming goblets. The negro exclaimed:

"I learned magic under one of the most skillful professors, who had inherited many secrets, which had passed in a direct line from father to son, from the days of Spanish conquest.

"And I," said the Norwegian, "may boast of an equal knowledge of the black art, as the people of the world stupidly call it."

"But let the rites begin," said the negro.

Barbara glanced at Ursula, who still surveyed the child (who fatigued by his long journey slept,) with looks of pity, and who had taken one step towards him; this motion was unheeded by all, save Barbara, who stepping close to Ursula, whispered fiercely to her: "If you take that brat away, I will inform all the others, and you know what the result would be."

Piles of wood were placed on the stones,

torches of resinous wood collected, and the glade was soon as light as day. The animals of the forest alarmed at the uncommon light and heat stole timidly to and fro, all danced madly around the flames. A smaller shrine was erected, all the stones of which were square, and the black seizing the child led himin front, and turning to his associates said:

"The victim is ready, to whom shall we devote him?"

"To the great power of destruction and evil," cried the whole assembly.

"Master," said the child, "what are you going to do with me? I never injured you, and yet I am afraid."

"You must die," was the stern reply.

The child uttered the most fearful shrieks, and a stalwart peasant rushed into the midst of the assembly. At the sight of this intruder, the Black Crook waved his wand thrice, and the shades disappeared.

"What means this confusion?" said the peasant, sternly. "I was returning late from a merry making at a little distance, and was at first attracted by the fire, and then by the screams of the child. I suspect foul play, and if my life be the forfeit, I shall prevent it. Wherefore are these two altars, and why did this child utter these fearful cries? I am a man, and no one shall injure him when I am here." The child glanced at the speaker, extended his hands to the stranger, as if claiming his protection, but was forcibly detained by the Norwegian.

"Our course is plain," said the Mexican. "Bind this rash intruder, who has dared to interrupt our sacred mysteries; none save the initiated can witness these rites and live. Let him die, he will be another victim." Rage sat on every line of her face, and what nature had intended to be beautiful was now fearfully ugly.

The recommendation of the Mexican was adopted, all the women furnished their garters and ribbons to bind him, in default of ropes, the black assuring the captive, that his turn would soon come.

Ursula glanced at the peasant, as if to entreat his aid, but was met by a warning look from Barbara. The rites now proceeded, the fire was fed, and the child bound hand and foot was placed on the smaller pile and stabbed to the heart. As the crimson fluid flowed it was caught in cups, which were set on the main altar. A few convulsions, a slight sob, and all was over. The body of the unfortunate little victim was then torn limb from limb and put on the fire.

"Now," *said the Mexican*, "we shall immolate the other. Be it your task brother, to lead him to the sacrificial stone."

The black turned to execute his task, but found to his great surprise, and the consternation of all, that the bonds had been too weak, and that he had escaped. All had been so occupied with the sacrifice of the child, that the second victim had been almost entirely disregarded.

The peasant had escaped; stealing quietly away, when at a reasonable distance, he me a mounted patrole, who had just commenced his rounds of duty. The officer placing his informant on his steed, put the animal to his utmost speed, and arrived at the headquarters of the rural police. The transaction was explained in a few words. The chief fortunately was in the reception-room, and instantly detailed a strong body of his force, heavily armed to capture the whole body in the woods. Confusion prevailed when the escape of the peasant was known; the fires were extinguished, and each prepared for immediate flight, regardless of his neighbors. Brief space, however, was allowed them; the mounted police, aided by a strong body of peasantry furnished with scythes and other agricultural implements, surrounded the wood, and in a loud voice summoned the party there present to surrender in the name of the emperor.

The black in attempting to escape, was encountered by a stalwart peasant; the negro who was a man of vast proportions; armed with pistols, and a short dagger, fought with a desperation worthy of a better cause; thrice he attempted to cleave the head of his assailant, and thrice was he baffled; his eyes flashed fire, and his mouth was distended with a hideous grin, foam flew from his thick misshapen lips, as from the fangs of a wild beast; the peasant was strong, but the negro was his equal; at length the European's strength began to fail, and he clamored loudly for assistance; others came up, and the black, after a vain struggle, was compelled to submit.

Barbara and Ursula were soon overpowered, the former uttering the most fearful maledictions, against her captors; all were now prisoners except the Mexican.

The whole bound with ropes, were taken to the Palais de Justice, and the judge of the district summoned, but as he resided at a distance, itw as nearly one in the morning, ere he reached the chamber, where an anxious crowd was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the functionary, who was to decide upon the fate of the prisoners.

The patrole and the peasant were duly sworn, and a messenger dispatched to the

scene of the tragedy, with instructions to collect any fragments that might be found; a breathless anxiety kept the whole crowd silent, and repeated glances were cast at the the door; the messenger returned, bearing a small bundle in his hand, which he placed before the judge, who silently and with marked emotion opened the packet; a suit of boy's clothes, was held up to the general view; some locks of hair, one little shoe, and some bones, with the half-roasted flesh still adhering. A vindictive roar rang through the room, and the old timbers shook, a movement, was made by the prisoners, which was perceived by the judge, who thus addressed the spectators:

"We are all engaged in a responsible duty, nd the law must take its course, be assured that justice shall be meted to all the individuals, whom you have aided in capturing; such great crimes shall not pass unnoticed; the sword of justice shall not remain long unsheathed, and this much I may safely add on my own responsibility, that the imperial clemency will not be extended to the persons who now stand before you; officer, remove the prisoners, and see that they are strictly guarded; and I charge all to respect the sanctity of the law."

The crowd slowly dispersed, and the prisoners heavily chained, were removed to a strong part of the Hotel de Ville, which was built in the middle ages, and each confined in a separate cell; Barbara petitioned that Ursula might share her apartment, but the jailor refused the request.

A worse fate befell the Mexican, as she fled on the wings of the wind, unnoticed amid the general confusion, she was enabled to effect her escape, and after a rapid walk of nearly three miles, exhausted with fear and fatigue, she sat down on a stone, and reflected on what course she should pursue, when to her unbounded horror, she found herself as she imagined in the grasp of one of the officials of the law; a trembling glance undeceived her; her opponent was a tall man advanced in life, with a gray beard descending to his waist, and entirely bald, whose wandering eye, showed that reason was overthrown.

"You are mine, you must come with me, my pretty bird, I have a sweet nest, which will just suit you, come."

The Mexican shuddered from head to foot, she felt an indefinable terror stealing over her, and yet dared not cry out for aid, as she was fearful that she would draw upon herself the attention of the police; struggling with all *the strength she could collect*, she was unable *to wrest herself from* the grasp of her opponent, who perceiving her intention to escape, seized her by the throat, and held her in a firm grasp, till she ceased to breathe. The next morning the man was found with his victim, and exaltingly exclaimed, "I killed her;" the slayer of the Mexican was a lunatic, confined in a neighboring farm house, who had been neglected in the confusion, and attracted by the noise and bustle, was making his way to the scene of the tragedy, when he met the sorceress; no one knew who she was, and she was interred in a corner of the grave yard appropriated to strangers.

CHAPTER XXV.

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF THE WITCHES.

A court room, whether for the trial of criminal offenders, or whether for civil cases, has always been interesting to me, and in spite of a long practice both at the bench and bar, I always regarded the suitors with great attention; it would be easy, even if there were no dock, in a case in which the crown is prosecutor to distinguish the defendants.—*Autobiography of Lord Mansfield.*

Three weeks had elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter, and the prisoners, under a strong guard, had been sent to Vienna, when the news was circulated that the witches had been captured and that they would be tried for witchcraft and child-murder. A crowd assembled in the vicinity of the prison to view the culprits, as they descended from the vehicles which brought them to the dread abode, which was to be their last resting place on earth.

The grand court of justice was now in session, and as soon as the necessary formalities permitted the prisoners were brought before it, the facts proved, and the criminals condemned to death at the stake. Ursula heard the sentence with calm composure; Barbara with oaths and imprecations directed against the court, the accusers, and the advocate for the crown; the black with sullen indifference, though during the progress of the case he eyed the different officials with the glare of a caged tiger; the Norwegian alone admitted her errors, and desired the spiritual services of a minister of her over creed. A few words from the Grand Justiciary warned the prisoners that they had no mercy to expect from the crown; the fiscal advocate arose and declared that the criminal court for the trial of the witches had finished its sessions, and that the offenders should be remanded to the prison whence they came.

All the priests in Vienna flocked to the prison to offer their services, but to the greater part of the prisoners uselessly. Ursula alone accepted the aid of a learned and pious Benedictine who had been for years renowned for his sanctity and gentleness of manner. Touching the wounds of this wretched woman's soul with the greatest tenderness and pity, Father Joseph succeeded in calling her attention to the miserable state in which she now found herself, and his pious labors were rewarded by Ursula admitting all her crimes and confess her agency in the murder of the young lieutenant. She admitted the justice of her fate, and bitterly lamented that she had not made greater efforts to save the child who had been murdered at the knoll.

Barbara remained implacable. Nothing could arouse her for a moment, or cool the vindictive rage with which she was animated against mankind. The most frightful oaths and execrations fell from her lips, and she rarely addressed the keepers without a curse. Once only did she betray some lingering remnant of feeling, when she asked if the cat and starling at her lodgings had been fed, or whether they died from neglect.

The black was obdurate, and sat with his arms folded, gazing on the sky from the little strip of window in his cell. To the entreaties of Father Joseph, who visited him, he turned a deaf ear, and once only after a long argument, in which the good priest endeavored to persuade him to repent, replied:

"The faith of my fathers is good enough for me. They tell me of the white man's God, and I have read his book, for know, most reverend Father, at an early age I was sent to a school in Paris and thence to Rome, but show me how many of the so-called Christians practice what they preach. They call themselves civilized, enlightened, and yet they tear the ignorant savage from his home, launch him on the deep, and when he finally arrives at his place of destination convert his toil, labor, and agony into gold. Should there be such a God as the Christians describe, he will indeed pour out his wrath upon the Europeans. The gods of my fathers will aid me. Farewell, trouble me no more with these disquisitions; let me enjoy as best I can the few short moments of life that still remain to me." Father Joseph, seeing that his mission was useless, never entered his cell again.

The fatal morning had arrived, when the prisoners were to forfeit their lives for their crimes; and at eight o'clock, the jailors and servants of the prison brought Ursula, Barbara, and the Black into the chapel.

This was a large vaulted apartment, with a high cieling, carved with considerable taste; and an altar erected at the eastern end. The tapers were lighted, and Father Joseph, clad in his sacerdotal garments, with two boys in white, stood within the rails, ready to celebrate mass; places were assigned to the condemned. Ursula listened attentively, and fervently recited the prayers in a small book given her by Father Joseph. Barbara was quiet, and the Black as usual, buried in reverie.

Twelve of the Brothers of Mercy, in the black serge habits of their order, hoods with holes cut for the eyes, their waists bound with cords, and bare feet, entered the chapel, and signified to the criminals that the last moment was near at hand, and requested all in the chapel to follow them to the adjoining room.

All obeyed, Barbara and the Black Crook mechanically, and Ursula telling her rosary. The superior of the confraternity, when they were in the room, asked the prisoners if they had any requests to make. The black and Barbara replied in the negative, and Ursula said that she hoped her example might be a warning to others, but that she had done with the things of this world. There was an immense crowd on the exterior of the prison, all who could snatch time from their other avocations hastened to the ghastly spectacle, as if it were a recreation, or holiday sport.

The prison gates were thrown open, and a lay brother bearing a crucifix headed the procession, next followed the members of the confraternity, Barbara with a Dominican friar, in his white robes, and Ursula and Father Joseph, and lastly the black with the prior of the Benedictines. The clerk of the court in a full suit of black velvet, a gold chain, and a furred mantle, read aloud the sentence of the court, condemning all the culprits there present to the penalty of death by fire, and pronouncing a sentence of outlawry against Wolfgang Hertzog. The heralds of the empire in their mediæval habits, and batons of silver with the imperial arms, stationed themselves at the different stakes to see the sentence duly carried into effect.

The executioner approched and taking Barbara gently by the arm, led her to a stake, to which she was attached by a strong iron chain, depending from a collar; the Dominican presenting a crucifix, begged that even then she would confess and repent, adding that it was not yet too late; a glance of scorn was her only reply.

Another executioner approached; the black, who gently repulsing him followed, and was also attached to the stake. His spiritual comforter tendered his services, but received no reply; just at that moment the sun gilded the

whole scene with great splendor; the black leaned forward, as if to adore that great luminary, the tutelary god of his sires; this aroused the indignation of Father Joseph, who made a last appeal, but uselessly. The assistants piling up faggots, awaited the commands of their superior, to set fire to the pile; twice was the signal given, and as often withdrawn, at the intercession of the friars, who endeavored, but uselessly, to induce the culprits to confess; absolution was imparted to Ursula by Father Joseph, the heralds tired of waiting, gave the fatal signal, and the ill-fated trio were soon enveloped in flames. Barbara and the black, did not flinch, Ursula slightly moved her position, clasped a small crucifix to her bosom, but uttered no sound. A company of guards stationed on the outside, maintained order, and the crowd separated after the criminals were heaps of ashes.

Intelligence was conveyed to the Swedish minister of the arrest and detention of the Norwegian; the secretary of legation was dispatched to the empress mother to request her intercession, the witches life was spared, on the condition that she should be sent to the north, whence she had escaped while a capital charge was pending against her.

The witch instantly sailed for her destination, and it chanced on her arrival, that a new king had mounted the throne, and it was resolved that all in custody should be pardoned, but as the crimes of this offender were so great, the council of state decided that her life should be spared, but that she should be sent to a state castle in the extreme north, and there immured for life; this sentence was strictly executed, the dungeon to which she was consigned, was damp, and its occupant was soon afflicted with cramps and rheumatisms; some rats entered at night, and fastened upon the ill-fated prisoner, who had not strength enough to repell the invaders, and whose voice could not have reached the upper apartments. When the jailor opened the cell in the morning, to bring in the food, he found the unfortunate woman half eaten; her body, with the consent of the governor of the fortress, was thrown into the sea, sewn upin a cloth with heavy weights.

Thus ended wretchedly, all who had been concerned in the abduction and murder of the innocent child at the knoll.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FLIGHT AND DEATH OF THE BLACK CROOK.

When I was in London, I went to the Zoological Garden, and was charmed with all I saw; each animal was placed in a domicile or den exactly suited to its habits: the giraffes were in an enclosure planted with trees, and displayed their graceful necks as they fed on the upper branches; the cockatoes and monkeys in immense rooms, chattered and leaped from corner to corner; the camels fed peaceably, and raised their heads from time to time, to gaze upon the visitors; I proceeded next to the serpent house, all the different varieties of the reptile tribe displayed their magnificent colors and graceful proportions; the deadly cobra de capello, the American rattlesnake, the Egyptian asp and viper, and several anacondas, reposed lazily on a sort of counter covere with flannel, and heated with water, which was always kept at the same temperature; the sides and top were glass. I could not look at these reptiles without shuddering.—*Six Weeks in London.*

When the peasant returned with the military and country people, the adept was crouching behind the larger altar, and escaped observation entirely. The fire gradually disappeared, the crowd accompanied the criminals, and in two hours the place was entirely deserted. The night was exquisitely clear, and the moon shone "like a pearl bark in a dark blue ocean." The adept listened attentively, no one was in pursuit, fortune had apparently favored him. Supporting himself on his staff, he hobbled with considerable speed, and did not relax his efforts till he was at least ten miles from the spot; a heavy task for so exceedingly infirm an old man to accomplish. It was now broad daylight, and the adept began to reckon his resources. He had on his finger a diamond ring of great purity and value, a gold chain of some weight, from which hung a cross set with sapphires, was concealed inside of his vest, a few silver coins were in a pouch, and a purse containing a thousand ducats was concealed in his waist.

A wagon drove up, and the adept asked the driver to take him up.

"What will you give?" asked the boor.

"I am poor, very poor; could you not take me for charity?"

"I must have something."

The adept fumbled, as if searching, affected great surprise, and ultimately produced a small silver coin, which was given to the driver. The man extended his hand, and the Black Crook soon widened the distance between himself and the scene of the tragedy. He now felt hungry, and was at a loss how to satisfy his appetite. His companion looked at

him very sharply. To his great relief the adept, when they came to another road, asked his companion which way he meant to take, as, if he not intend going to the lower part of the empire, they must separate. The Black Crook assented, alighted from the vehicle, and sitting down on the roadside waited till the wagon was entirely out of sight, then resuming his walk reached an alehouse, where liquors were sold, and demanded some refreshment.

"Have you heard the news?" asked the landlady, as she placed some food and wine on a rustic table before him.

"As I am a stranger in this part of the country, perhaps you will be so kind as to tell me."

"Some witches, about twenty-five miles from here, have been playing their infernal tricks; but they were caught. Two of them have yet to be found, a man and woman; I hope that they will be taken."

This was not very agreeable intelligence to the adept, who finished his meal without uttering a word, paid his reckoning and departed, but was at a loss whither to wend his way. He had taken the precaution to secrete a portion of his meal, and wishing his hostess good morning, hastily departed.

The Black Crook was at a loss to which part of the empire he should direct his steps. If he could only reach the Turkish frontier, he would be perfectly safe. He had considerable funds in the hands of the Dutch bankers at Amsterdam, which city he could reach from Constantinople, and whence he could send messengers to Vienna. Passing by a hedge, he saw a laborer's smock frock which he did not hesitate to appropriate, and, thus garbed, resembled a peasant. Meeting a little boy, he asked where he was, and to his great joy found that he was on the road to the Turkish frontier; two or at most three days would place him in safety—he had no fears for the future.

Exhausted with travel, he rested at the next village inn, where he arrived late in the afternoon, all night, and did not resume his journey till late in the day, as he had an opportunity of a post wagon which would enable him to make more rapid progress than if he travelled on foot.

The following day, at noon, the Black Crook arrived at a small cottage, and on asking where he could find the next tavern, and was informed that the nearest house of entertainment was at a distance of ten miles, but that he was welcome to such accommodation as they had. The place was retired, and as the old man and his wife, the only inhabitants of the cottage, did not seem disposed to meddle or ask questions, the adept decided that he would remain for that night at least; and in the course of the meal learned that he was near the chateau of the Prince de Bevern, a German nobleman of French descent, who by his marriage with a wealthy heiress had acquired a vast landed estate, and resided in the vicinity. The old man further added that the prince was fond of birds and beasts, and had a large collection of animals attached to his residence—a lion, which had been recently added to his menagerie, having been for some weeks the wonder of the country for nearly twenty miles round.

Perhaps, thought the adept, if I can make the acquaintance of his groom, I can prevail on him, for a few gold pieces, to convey me to the frontier, and then all danger is at an end.

With this view, the adept, after the morning meal had been dispatched, set out to view the domains of the prince. The castle was spacious, superbly built, and placed in the midst of extensive gardens elegantly laid out. Handsome stables were seen in the rear, and a large building, with open doors, invited the traveller to enter. Animals of various kinds were in cages, occupied in crunching their food, but no attendant was there, nor as he passed through the garden did the adept see any one. Another apartment opened into that occupied by the animals, and the Black Crook went in to see what was there, and beheld several serpents in oblong boxes with wire lattices; a large cage, evidently intended for an immense reptile was vacant.

The Black Crook gazed around; a few moments sufficed to gratify his curiosity, and entering the other room, quitted the building; and treading the mazes of the garden, soon found himself in a delicious grove, of which a mighty oak which had evidently seen more than a century constituted the chief ornament. Allured by the shade, the Black Crook sat down, but his olfactories were soon greeted with an insupportable smell, and he suddenly glanced round to see whence it came. A rustling above his head attracted his attention, and, looking up, saw as he conceived the eyes of a common snake, dismissed the matter entirely from his mind, and began to plot how he should make the acquaintance of some one who would enable him to reach the haven of safety for which he so ardently longed.

His meditations, however, were abruptly ended, and he saw, to his horror and surprise, an immense boa constructor, the largest of its kind, who had escaped from the menagerie of the prince, dropping on the lower trunk of the oak. Flight was impossible; and the gem-like eye of the creature glittered with intense en-

citement as it beheld its prey. The adept was glued to the spot with horror; his blood froze in his veins. Had he been thus far in safety and escaped the death which inevitably awaited his associates to undergo a more fearful doom. Brief space was however allowed for these reflections; the serpent "quick as meditation on the thoughts of love," folded the wretched man in his fatal embrace; its fetid breath poisoned the atmosphere, and the miserable adept already saw that his minutes were counted. It was useless to struggle; the snake relaxed its efforts for a moment, as if to gain time to breathe, then using the tree as a lever, wound its massive coils with deadly effect round the body of the adept, and then, as if fatigued with the exertion, lay for a few moments passive.

The Black Crook though severely injured was not dead; vast suffering was still in store for him; cries were useless, no earthly power could arrest the speedy approach of the most fearful death. The boa raising its head, gazed steadfastly at the face of its victim, then tightening its folds proceeded with its task of destruction. Nerve after nerve quivered, and broke under the fearful shock, still the pressure continued. The muscles strained beyond their utmost tension snapped, and the sound fell upon the sufferer's ear with the most agonizing distinctness, still he breathed; as yet the bones were unbroken, the breath of the adept was shorter, his heart beat more quickly than ever; he seems to have undergone all the physical torture of which the human frame is capable. In addition to his other torments, the Black Crook was now assailed with an intolerable thirst, and he would have given all the treasures he had amassed for a single cup of water. The blood poured in quantities from his ears and nostrils, his bones were still untouched, and his feet yet had some life. As if his deadly foe entertained some idea of what was passing in his mind, it contracted a third time the muscular folds of its black and yellow skin, the scales, of which glittered, in the sun like gold, and the adept, like the unhappy priest of Neptune and his sons, saw himself bound in mighty rings, from which he could not extricate himself. Crack went the bones, with a sickening sound falling on the ear of the Black Crook like the herald of death, and yet the *coup de grace* had not been given. The serpent seemed satisfied with its conquest, and inclined to play with its wretched victim, who lay a mangled, bleeding, and crushed yet sentient mass in the relentless grasp of its fell *destroyer. Nerves, bones,* muscles, and tendons *have disappeared,* and not all the science that the world has ever produced, could have restored them to their former functions. A slight noise, which was imperceptible to the blunted senses of the Black Crook, alarmed the serpent, who concentrating all his efforts, crushed out the last remnants of life. The eye of the Black Crook became glazed, the landscape receded from his view, a faint quiver of the limbs, and the soul quitted her tenement forever.

Suddenly unwinding himself, the serpent contemplated his prey, and commenced covering it with saliva. The corpse was now a shapeless mass, and the serpent opening his vast jaws, gradually sucked in the crushed and bleeding substance.

The prince's servants, who had for several days been in search of the anaconda, came up shortly after the serpent had finished his meal, but found no traces of the adept. And as the monster was gorged with the food he had taken, and was easily captured, no one suspected for a moment, what had taken place; his keeper was alarmed, as for several days the snake refused food. Thus ended the Black Crook, once the terror of Madrid and the wonder and detestation of Vienna.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONFESSION OF THE BLACK CROOK.

"It is a very strange fact, gentlemen of the jury, but equally true, that great criminals are apt to record their thoughts, feelings, and actions. I have noticed it in several instances; it seems to afford them some relief. The book is before you, gentlemen, and you will find therein a full record of all the forgeries he has committed."—*Charge of the Associate Justice on the Trial of Fauntleroy.*

Three weeks and more elapsed, and still the Black Crook did not return, leaving Grepo alone in the house. The drudge becoming alarmed applied to the police, who after a due examination, resolved to search the adept's private recesses to ascertain who were his heirs. Gold to the amount of fifty thousand ducats, and quantities of jewels, which were estimated by a lapidary at one hundred thousand ducats, were found; in the writing desk habitually used by the adept, was a small parchment bound volume, of which the chief of the police took possession.

When alone the chief examined his prize, which was entirely in MSS., and found several receipts, and a confession at the back, which

we shall lay before our readers. The narrative commenced by stating that the writer, Ramon de Herrera, belonged to one of the most ancient families of Castile. That a fall in his infancy had lamed and crippled him, and that he became a taunt and jest to all who surrounded him from his earliest infancy.

"This gave me a hatred to the human family, and I resolved to be revenged on all my species; chance threw me into contact with an old Arabian, who was possessed of many magical secrets, and the art of compounding rare poisons; I remained with this master of his art three years, at the end of which period he died, bequeathing me his library, apparatus and gold. I then commenced practice; my first essay was on the life of the Count d' Asumar, a powerful and wealthy Spanish grandee, who had married a young wife; the countess was desirous of ridding herself of her aged consort, and offered me a heavy bribe if I could succeed; a deadly potion prepared after the receipt, left by the Arabian, was administered in a peach; in six weeks, the count was dead; leaving his widow with a dolorous countenance, a heavy purse, and a light heart. For this service she gave me a thousand ducats, and a magnificent emerald; three months more elapsed, and again my services were invoked; a needy and desperate man, was very nearly related to a wealthy Neapolitan marquis, and after his son, was the next heir to the title; he came to me, and placing a thousand ducats on the table, said, 'he would double that sum if I could remove this hateful brat; I consented, and for a bribe of fifty ducats, hired a gypsey to bring me the child, who was sent to Cadiz, to be shipped to America, with a special injunction to be pushed overboard. I need not say that he never saw Spain again; the gypsey who had been employed came to me one night, imploring food and shelter; seeing that she was trembling with cold, I gave her a cup of wine; by my orders she was liberally supplied with food; the next day she was found dead in her bed; thus I removed all trace of the abduction of the young marquis; my coffers overflowed with gold, and my house was the resort of all Madrid; young men who wished to rid themselves of their aged parents, husbands of their wives, wives of their husbands, churchmen of a tyrannical bishop, or political rivals of their opponents, all flocked to me; I could scarcely record all those whom I sent to their last account, in the thirteen years I spent at Madrid; I never used the steel, nor employed the assassin; I disliked the intervention of agents, and generally dealt with *principals · if I used agents*, I generally contrived to rid myself of such parties very speedily, and in such a manner, as to leave no trace behind. There is a rare plant that grows in the country bordering on the Bay of Bengal, when reduced to powder, it has neither taste nor smell, may readily be mixed with any substance; its effects are deadly; for the first few days after a person has partaken of it, he feels a dizziness in the head, a weakness in the limbs, and racking pains; no matter what remedies are given, these increase; blindness supervenes, deafness follows, and ere death releases the sufferer, he is a moping idiot. The person whom I wished to remove, was invited to a banquet, partook of the choicest food, the most luscious fruit, and the most exquisite and costly wines; it was generally the last meal, which yielded him any satisfaction: such men never tell tales.

A singular circumstance led to my removal from Madrid; a rich young lord, was anxious to remove a hated rival out of the way, and employed a steward, whom he thought devoted to his interest, to apply to me, to effect his purpose; I agreed, and handed to the go-between a liquid, pure to the sight as water, inodorous and tasteless, distilled from green almonds, any one taking a few drops of this preparation, expires within six hours. The hated enemy was taken out of the way, but the steward, before I had time to invite him to a banquet, was smitten with what he conceived to be his mortal sickness, and sending for a priest revealed all that had passed.

Some three years before when riding in the vicinity of Madrid, I saw a wounded man lying on the grass. I approached to see if I could be of any service, and found that his leg was broken. Possessing some surgical knowledge, I set the fractured limb, took him to my house, where I kept him till he was perfectly cured. His gratitude was boundless, and as the stars were always propitious to me, he took service in the steward's household, and overheard the confession and the monk's reply.

"I shall place this matter before the grand inquisitor."

Juan hastened to me, and adjured me, in the name of all the saints, to quit Madrid, as the holy office would speedily send her myrmidons to arrest me; the advice was too good to be neglected. It was then about seven o'clock in the evening. I called on a Jew of great wealth and known integrity, who in exchange for my gold, gave me bills on Amsterdam. I put three thousand ounces in gold in my purse, secured my most valuable jewels

about my person, and quitting the city on foot, abandoned my home and all it contained to the clutches of the holy office, reached Cadiz safely, whence I embarked for Holland.

The officer turned over the leaves of the journal, and found merely a record of the adept's stay in Holland, and where he lodged. There was a hiatus of ten or twelve pages, and then this should have been placed several pages back.

One day the tire-woman of the Duchess of Ossuna came to me and asked if I could procure a child for her. I replied that it was possible. She further added, that it would be worth to me a large sum. The man whose leg I had cured had an acquaintance, a gypsey woman, who frequently brought me gold to test. I remembered that she had a child, and affected great fondness for it.

Catalina was forced to quit the city, and asked permission to leave the child with me; I consented. The mother brought and left her with me. I sent for the duchess' tire-woman and showed her the little prattler. The duchess' own child, who had been sent to nurse in the country, died, and the woman who had the charge of it, did not wish to lose the salary and perquisites to which she was entitled, and wished to substitute another in its room. She came, and as soon as she saw the little Zara (such was her name), cried; what a resemblance? no one can tell the difference. I must have her, she will save my lady many a heartbreak. I consented, delivered the child to the nurse, who paid me the price on which she had agreed, and took Zara with her. The duchess received Zara as her own, and she is now the wife of a Spanish nobleman of ancient descent and vast possessions. She is now—here the MSS. abrubtly terminated with—I have committed no crimes worthy of record either in Holland or Vienna. No human blood has been shed by me, either directly or indirectly, in either of the places just named.

Due proclamation was made for the heirs at law and nearest of kin, to come forward and claim the property belonging to the adept; but no one appearing the estate was swept into the public treasury; a liberal allowance was made to Grepo. The luckless negro was found dead near the knoll with several wounds, as he was probably mistaken for one of the witches, and the color of his skin inducing a belief that he was a chosen and accredited emissary of the Prince of Darkness. Thus ended the Black Crook, with all his companions.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WEDDING FESTIVITIES.

"Marriages and funerals are the two great occasions of a man's life, and no book can be said to be completed unless there be a small seasoning of both."—*The Doctor.*

The Prince of Auersperg did not verify the old adage, "that the course of true love never runs smoothly." The lady smiled upon his suit, and the Count Palfi was equally successful with the Countess Lingotski, and when consent was asked, it was not refused. All of rank and fashion that Vienna could then boast were bidden to the wedding, and the ceremony was graced by the presence of several of the Archdukes; even Prince Lobkowitz, who had been buried in his library for several years, quitted his retirement, and danced a *Minuet de la Cour* with the Baroness Teleki, to the admiration of all the bystanders. And so enchanted was the old prince with the newly wedded bride, that he invited her to pass the honey moon at his castle in the interior of Bohemia, and sent intelligence of his speedy arrival. This was one of the most magnificent mansions in that ancient kingdom, and Prince Lobkowitz as one of the oldest magnates, was entitled to a guard of honor.

The party, including the artist and Madame Kleinfeldt, left Vienna in the heavy coaches of the period, and journeyed by easy stages to the chateau, where the steward and all the tenantry were ready to do the honors. A sumptuous repast was spread in the large hall and, after the meats had been removed, the streward, ushering a number of the most respectable tenants, craved permission to drink to the health of his noble master, and to wish health and prosperity to the noble brides.

The prince graciously bowed assent, the glasses were filled, and the old hall re-echoed with the shouts of "Long live Prince Lobkowitz!" "Prosperity to the most precious Princess Auersperg!" "Luck attend the noble Count Palfi!" The count and the prince testified their sense of the honor conferred on them by largesses of gold and silver coin, and the fair brides courtesied down to the ground in acknowledgment of the pcliteness of their country friends.

Horses were ordered, and the whole party were soon in pursuit of the stag. A rustic collation was spread in the park under the shade of some large oaks, and the hours passed till the "weary sun by the bright track of his fiery car gave token of a goodly day on the morrow."

Invitations had been issued for a dance.

All on the estate, clad in their best, repaired to the grand hall in the castle, where they were received in great state by the steward, assisted by Puffengruntz and his new spouse, formerly the Dame Christina. The eldest matron on the estate, clad in the national Bohemian costume, advanced to the prince, and said:

"My gracious lord, it has always been the custom, when one of the daughters of your noble house marries, that the girls of the village celebrate the event by one of our national dances. When your sister was contracted to the Prince Seitz I danced."

"And you shall do so now, if you will condescend to accept me as your partner. You and yours have been faithful servitors to me and mine for the last three centuries."

The dame smiled, and, with a courtesy, replied, "You do me too much honor."

The steward with a white wand entered the hall, followed by the guard of honor, who, in the old costume of the time of the great Maximilian, stationed themselves against the wall, like statues. The prince opened the ball, and two young farmers led out the ladies. In the midst of the dance, twelve girls entered the room, whom the guard courteously saluted; the parties on the floor made space for them, and a variety of pirouettes were executed with grace and agility. Twelve more entered the room, clad in light drapery, holding wreaths. These ranged themselves on either side, forming an arch with their flowers, under which their companions passed. These latter now took the wreaths, and their companions passed under the arch in turn. Kleinfeldt was so charmed with the scene that he made a sketch of, which, when transferred to canvas, he begged the Prince Lobkowitz's acceptance. A magnificent supper was spread in the large hall for the humbler guests, where wine and ale were freely distributed. A smaller reception room was allotted for the accommodation of the prince and his guests, and many a matron, when youth had flown, recounted to her grandchildren as they gathered around her knees, the festivity and splendor of the entertainment when the young Princess Lobkowitz was united to the Prince Auresperg, and here, gentle reader, we will drop the curtain.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BALLET GIRL.

When I was a much younger man, I was exceedingly fond of the theatre, and was never tired of contemplating the bright and beautiful beings, who sported before the foot-lights, *in silver gauze* and spangles, and was sorry when the curtain separated me from those bright visions of beauty; one day I was doomed to be disappointed. I was walking in that part of London, very near the theatre, and heard a person say: Miss ——, it was the name of the figuerate whom I had seen the night before in "La Sylphide," the enchantment completely vanished—she was a vulgarly dressed dowdy.—*Horace Walpole's letters.*

A theatre at night is a fairy palace of enchantment; the lights, music, scenery, actors, and audience all combine to form a *tout ensemble* of enchantment, which time and experience sometimes are unable to dispel. But the same place by day presents a very different aspect—the palaces and fairy castles of the previous night have resolved themselves into very ordinary daubs, the chairs and sofas, which, at a distance, wore the semblance of damask, are now only coarse imitations, and the kings and queens, who ranted the night before in all the gorgeousness of velvet and fur; sweeping trains and glittering armor metamorphosed into common place shabby looking men and women, conning greasy MSS., or tattered books. The theatrical life is full of trials, disappointments and anxieties; few attain eminence, and the hard toilers in the lower walks of the profession can scarcely earn bread; our province however, lays with the ballet girl, who particulary in the gay city of Paris, constitutes a feature in the population.

The French, as a nation, are gay, volatile, and fond of pleasure, dancing may be said to be their national amusement, and few nations pursue it with greater zest and enjoyment; the life of a ballet girl commences properly, from the very cradle; if a child in the Parisian working class, evinces a talent for dancing, its vocation is fixed, she must be a ballet girl; if an ear for music, she is destined for the opera comique, or the conservatoire; but the greater part choose the ballet, (or rather their parents select it for them;) the aid of the neighboring dancing master is invoked, or perhaps some retired actress, who occupies an apartment in the fifth story, condescends for the consideration of a few francs, to give some lessons, and volunteers an an introduction to the stage manager of some third or fourth rate theatre on the Boulevards, or the Porte St. Martin, but rarely to the grand opera. Perhaps the mother or aunt, has some ambition, and at once determines that her protegee shall have the benefit of at least a trial at the grand opera—these theatres may be well enough, but they would suit her Lucille, and accordingly the pair betake themselves to the back of the opera

house; the Cerberus who guards the entrance to these enchanted regions, looks suspiciously at the young girl, in her cheap finery, and the old or middle aged woman in her shabby shawl and crushed bonnet; and in reply to a request, whether the stage manager can be seen, answers that he cannot say, he does not know, he will see, the ladies can seat themselves, and as he speaks, points to a not very inviting bench; the young girl looks disappointed, but her conductress more experienced in the ways of the world, modestly slips a five franc piece in the hand of the great man's great man, who makes a ghost of a bow, and quietly glides away to the sanctuary, which they dare not as yet enter—is absent for what seem to them, an hour, and finally returns with the welcome intelligence, that the ladies will be good enough to walk back and see the stage manager himself.

This important functionary, who holds the fate of so many in his hands, receives the new aspirant to theatrical honors, in his private apartment, ornamented with portraits of theatrical and dramatical celebrities; eyes the young girl, as a trainer of race horses, a colt, and at once decides whether or not, she will be of any service; if she be handsome, or have an interesting face, he will pass over minor defects, as if she have any capacity, she must by dint of perseverance and extra drilling, learn something; if well shaped, and with a small foot orpretty ankle, he will take her; these are great natural gifts, which more than counterbalance any defects of person or face. If disposed to engage her, she is directed to call the next day, to attend a rehearsal; if on the contrary, he does not think that any thing can be made of her, he politely informs the pair, that the establishment is at present amply supplied, that he sees no opening, but that they can leave their names; the judgment of these functionaries is unerring, and yet sometimes they are mistaken, as both Crito and La Manda, a celebrated Spanish dancer were rejected. We will however suppose that she has been accepted, that her name is on the roll, and that though in an humble capacity, she is a member of the grand opera company.

The next day, with considerable trepidation, she makes her appearance on the stage, and looks curiously upon her future associates. The stage is in disorder; the scene-shifter, stage-carpenter, machinist, and other officials in their shirt-sleeves, pass to and fro across the stage, not forgetting to cast a glance at the newcomer. Her future associates, gathering at the wings, glance sharply at the *nouvelle arrivee*, and debate, almost in her hearing, *who she is, and where does* she live. The stage manager returns the profoundly respectful courtesy of his new acquaintance with rather a cool nod; he is fretting and fuming internally, though too polite to show it. The great lady, the feature of the establishment, has not yet arrived. There is a little bustle; the stage manager brightens up and comes forward—no, he is not disappointed. The first dancer, who has turned the heads of half Europe, has finally condescended to come to rehearsal. Her costume is perfect; her boots and gloves, of the cut, shape, and color prescribed by fashion, fit her "to a hair." Throwing aside her mantle, which she consigns to her maid, the sovereign of the hour intimates that she is ready. the music strikes up, the ballet master comes to the front of the stage, the wings are deserted, and the business of the establishment fairly begins. The ballet master inquires who the stranger is, and is told a new aspirant. She is requested to look on, and, after the business is terminated, he will give her half an hour to herself. She sees the habitues of the theatres twist themselves into every conceivable and to her inconceivable position, and wonders whether she shall ever be so smart. At last the half hour promised arrives; the stage is cleared; the great lady departs with some whiskered adorer, and then to her the great trial begins.

The first position is to her almost, if not quite, impossible; for the first ten minutes, a gleam of hope then lightens her face—she has some inkling of what he wants—and to her unbounded delight and her instructor's satisfaction, achieves something resembling the first position. "Bien! bien!" exclaims the old man, tapping his snuff-box, "let us try again, and see what we can do." The professor places his feet in the required position, his pupil closely observing his motions does or tries to do the same, and at the close of the lesson has a more comfortable idea of what is expected. The stage manager dismisses her with the injunction to be punctual or she will be forfeited.

Seven o'clock soon comes, and the ballet leaves home for the coulisses; the passages are brilliantly lighted, the scenes set, people are constantly arriving and departing; girls with bundles are passing up and down stairs, and bewildered among this confusion she does not know where to go, and timidly asks the way. "As high as you can go," said the stage-carpenter, "and then stop." Panting she stops at the last door, throws it open, and enters a large, bare looking apartment, which when the management are remarkably liberal, a fire in the centre: a shelf runs its entire length, which, with some small, cheap looking

glasses, hung at irregular intervals, constituted the entire furniture. All her companions of the morning are there, but have laid aside their ordinary street attire and appear either as Swiss peasants, court ladies, with trains of velvet and mock diamond tiaras, or in clouds of muslin, heaps of spangles, wreaths of flowers, and countless knots of ribbon. Some are applying a little bit of color, others giving the last touch to their hair; some are practising before a mirror, and others are unpacking a basket and grumbling because certain articles they deemed indispensable are wanting. When dressed, all descend, and the stage is as fully peopled as in the morning; the prompter anxious, the stage-manager worried, and the call-boy impertinent; some are laughing, some quarreling, and others peeping at the audience through sundry ingeniously contrived slits.

The last bell rings, the curtain rises, and all are on the stage. The leading dancer attracts the attention of the public and leaves the lesser lights unnoticed, but the ballet girls are not idle, and one observes to another in a low but perfectly audible tone:

"Look at that Zephyrine, she is with the Englishman now; he is perfectly infatuated with her. I saw them together the other day in the Champs Elysees. But do look at that woman—aint she superb?"

The queen of the evening has executed one of her most daring pirouettes; a tunic of white satin embroidered with silver, tightly fitting to the bust, displays the matchless beauty of her figure. This garment descends to the waist, and her ankles, covered with flesh-colored silk, attract all eyes; opera glasses are directed, so as to command the matchless proportions and graceful swell of the well turned thigh and neatly rounded ankle. Ladies of quality in the boxes simper, turn aside their heads, and wonder why the management would permit such an exposure, and yet nightly are to be seen in the place, "so that the very stones prate of their whereabouts." Old bachelors, men about town, survey the danseuse, make broad observations about her, and contrast her with the artistes of their youth; young lordlings, who have more cash and time than wit, vow that she is the finest woman that they ever saw; such a foot, such a magnificent ankle, and then, and then—but we will not go further; bouquets fall in a flowery rain from all parts of the house, and the curtain falls amid a thunder of applause. Her maid comes on the stage with a large basket, to carry off the tribute paid to her mistress' talents. The wearied artistes soon quit the theatre to seek *the repose they need* so much; mothers are waiting outside for some of the ballet troupe, others avail themselves of the services of some young men. Some of these escorts are elegantly dressed, and frequently invite their fair companions to partake of a bottle of wine and some refreshment; these offers are rarely if ever refused. The others are not quite so well dressed, their boots are mended, their coats are shabby, and their linen is not quite snowy white. Six months thus pass, and the young girl is now thoroughly broken into harness, every nook and corner of the theatre are well known to her; she can tell at a glance who admires her, and knows certain elderly peers, antiquated marquises, and damaged dukes. She thinks that her mother's notions are old fashioned, and that she can do without her rather better than with her, and finally tells mamma, or ma tante, that as the nights are so cold she will not trouble her to come to the opera house for her. She has observed a young Russian, who looks like a bear, speaks French abominably, but who sports, oh such loves of diamond rings; he comes behind the scenes and looks at her. With a little management she might yet win him, she will make his acquaintance; she throws herself in his way, and succeeds. The apartments on the fifth floor are exchanged for an elegantly furnished suite on the second; the solitary chop or egg, with a thin shaving of butter, is replaced by a Periford pie, a pound of the most delicious yellow Guernsly butter, and the strongest Mocha poured from a richly chased silver pot, the cracked and mismatched crockery has given place to the most exquisite Severes. Youth is the season of enjoyment, the Russian has plenty of gold, and she is determined to spend it. The mornings are passed at the opera house, the afternoons at the Bois de Boulogne, where she occasionally sees Zephyrine or Celestine, who have not had so much luck as she; they wear imitation, she real cachemire silk dresses of every shade and color fill her closet; diamonds, rubies, and emeralds glitter in her jewel cases, cameos are a drug. This lasts for nearly a year, when the Russian informs the lady that he is going to London, and will not return for ten days. La belle Josephine (for so we will call her), sighs, melts into a flood of tears, and conjures her beloved Ivan not to stay away from her so long. He returns sooner than he expected, and what is his surprise when he admits himself with a pass-key to find his inamorata at breakfast with a young English lord, who has the air and manner of a man who is master of all he surveys. The Russian is too polite to quarrel with Lord Tamington, who has just completed his majority, and come to Paris to

spend some loose thousands which have accumulated at his bankers during his minority, and is exceedingly anxious to see life. He has noticed Md'lle Josephine at the opera, who has learned ere this to make the most of her charms to poise herself on her toes, show her ankles, exhibit her bust, and place herself before the footlights in positions carefully copied from some of the worst productions of the most lascivious school in the world. The young lord is fascinated, and Josephine nothing loath, is ready to accept his protection, dines daily on the Boulevards, and is the envy and delight of all her associates; but the ballet girl is liable to accidents, a fall, a cold, a sprain, and all these are incident to her profession, rob her of her charms, and then she is remembered as that fascinating Flora; don't you remrmber her? Well, she caught a fever, and could dance no more; she lived with the Russian, then with the Italian Duca di San Cotolda, but where she is now, or where she lives, no one knows, or perhaps you may recollect Therese, she was at the ballet at the same time with Cerito, but she sprained her ankle and has been good for nothing ever since.

Even should the ballet girl escape any of the accidents above mentioned, still time, late hours, and the various inconveniences attendant on her profession age her more perceptibly than women in private life, and at forty-five the ballet girl is but a shadow of her former self. They rarely have sufficient discretion to economize for this; their admirers have fled with their waning charms. Some jewels of no great value, a few half worn silk dresses, and a faded cachmere constitute her sole possessions, or, if she has been so fortunate as to save enough to purchase a moderate annuity, she generally lives in the fifth story with a parrot or a lap-dog. In default of such means, the old ballet dancer is only too glad to accept the position of *ma tante* or *ma cousine* to some young and handsome artiste, preside over her household, drive away the poverty-stricken scions of fashion and properly encourage the wealthy, for which she receives a small salary, a wretched lodging, and is compelled to submit to the caprices of one who, when she grows old, will fill the same position. Such is a brief history of the ballet girl in nearly all the cities of Europe.

NOTES

Allusion has been made in the text to the condition of the lower and laboring classes. These, in all parts of Europe, were in a most deplorable condition; hard worked, ill fed, under paid, and lacking the necessaries of life, while their lords generally resided at the court, and rarely visited their estates, except during the hunting season. All offices were closed to them; these were engrossed by the nobles, and a host of sinecures, with large salaries, created expressly for their accommodation. Did a young man study for the Church, he could never hope to rise to the mitre; the purple was specially reserved for the younger son of some pliant courtier, who had no other way of providing for him. To such an extent was this carried, that many of the hierarchy were open unbelievers, and only entered the priesthood for the sake of emolument.

If a young peasant, allured by the representations of a recruiting sergeant, enlisted in the army, he could rise no higher than a non-commissioned officer; these posts again were reserved for the younger scions of the counts, marquises, and others who filled the antechambers of royalty, and eagerly courted the smiles and caresses of the king.

All these privileges were swept away in France by the edict of 1793, and the French peasantry and mechanics recognized as a power in the state, and entitled to some privileges.

But the condition of the noble in Austria remains the same to this day. He has certain privileges of which the crown alone can deprive him, and then only when convicted of high crimes and misdemeanors; the circle is jealously guarded, and entrance to the higher ranks hermetically sealed, except to all possessing the sixteen quarterings. They have to this day the same feeling and use the same language as that attributed to the speaker in the text. The revenues of some of these nobles are immense, and their possessions unlimited.

The English aristocracy, though exceedingly jealous of their privileges, are yet willing, if the applicant possess a golden key, to admit him into their circle, and seldom refuse an opulent match when offered. Like the French brethren of 1793, they engross all the lucrative offices in the State, Church, army and navy.

As some allusion has been made in the text to the Cenci, we will give a brief sketch of that famous tragedy, which terrified Rome when it was enacted, and whose memory

is still fresh, Francesco Cenci was noted for his avarice, he had inherited a large sum from his father, which he strove to increase by all possible means to add to his wealth; he married an heiress, whose name, history has not preserved, who at her death left him seven children; cruelty and hatred of his offspring, were joined to his avarice, and it is retated that when building a church near his palace, he designed a catacomb, saying, "It s here that I hope to bury them all."

Three of his sons were sent to Salamanca; this unnatural parent hoped that he would not see them again, but after a few months, struggle they returned, having begged their way from Spain to Italy, and endured every kind of privation; the unhappy children, for they were scarcely more, petitioned Clement the VIII, to interpose his authority to wring from their cruel parent, the sums absolutely necessary for their support; the Pontiff listened to their prayer, and directed Francesco Cenci to allow each of his sons an annuity of two thousand crowns; the prince tried every means to elude the payment of the money, all his pretences were useless, and he was forced to hand over the amount to the apostolic treasurer. Francesco had married a second time, a woman of great beauty, Lucretia, and on her and his two daughters the elder Cenci, concentrated all his rage; this soon became so into lerable, that his eldest daughter besought the pope to compel her father to do her justice; the sovereign again interfered, and constrained Francesco Cenci, to give his daughter sixty thousand crowns, with which she was married to Prince Gabrielli; death at this time relieved Francesco of two of his sons, Rocco and Christoforo, one by an ignorant surgeon, and the other by the hand of an assassin. Even after their death, his hatred pursued them; he view edtheir corpses with the greatest pleasure, said that he should not be happy till his five other children followed their brothers, and refused to pay the expenses of their interment; no funeral ceremonies were performed at the burial of these unhappy beings, whose morning of life had been so overcast.

His wife Lucretia, and Beatrice, now were the special objects of Francesco Cenci's vindictive hate; his daughter was exceedingly beautiful, she had scarcely seen thirteen summers; her long auburn hair, with a paly golden tint, hung on her shoulders in the most luxuriant curls; and her blue eyes shone like stars; ere she knew what vice was, she fell; worn out with the exactions and brutal lust of her unnatural parent, and lacking all the necessaries of life; she, with her stepmother, petitioned the Pope for relief, but this time, Francesco was on his guard, the document never reached the sovereign, gold barred all the doors, and closed every access; business for a season, compelled Francesco Cenci, to leave his home, and his eldest son, profiting by his absence, came with a friend, Guerra, to visit his stepmother and sister; Guerra was twenty five, "the glass of fashion, and the mould of form;" admired by all the marriageable damsels of the Eternal City; he conceived a passion for Beatrice, which was reciprocated; on the return of Francisco, Guerra asked him for his daughter in marriage, but was informed, "she is my mistress;" this answer was reported to Beatrice; a council was summoned, and it was resolved that the old man should die; he had struck Lucretia, and her fiery Italian nature, could not brook the insult.

Two assassins were hired, and the 9th of September, 1598, was named as the period, when the crime should be committed; on that evening his wine was drugged, and Francesco retiring, was soon buried in profound slumber the assassins then were stealthily introduced, and saw the old man, extended on the bed, the moon beams pouring into the room, tinged his gray hairs with a silvery hue, and unmanned the paid bravos; they quitted the apartment, and announced that the work was not done.

Beatrice, crimson with anger, indignantly exclaimed:

"Is it thus that men, who boast of bravery and strength of mind, shrink, and have not the courage to slay a sleeping old man. How would you then dare the deed were he awake? And thus you steal the price of blood. Go then, and since your cowardice nerves my hand, I myself will kill my father! As for you, your lives shall not be long secure!"

The crime was consummated, and the lifeless corpse thrown upon the terrace, where it was found the following day. Some suspicion arose in the mind of the castle laundress, to whom the bloody sheet was given with some frivolous excuse, but nothing substantial was alleged against any of the family, and they imagined that they would escape. False hope, vain delusion! One of the ruffians, who had driven the nail which deprived Francesco Cenci of life, had been arrested at Naples, put to the rack, and confessed all he knew. Information was sent to Rome, and Beatrice, her mother, and brother arrested.

Timely information was conveyed to Guerra, who changed clothes with a seller of charcoal, purchased his asses, bribed him to silence with

an immense sum, eventually escaped, and his fate remains to this day a mystery.

Lucretia and Beatrice, shortly after their arrest, were put to the torture. The latter refused to criminate herself or others, but when she heard that her brother had confessed, acknowledged her guilt, and signed her deposition.

Clement VIII., who then sat in the chair of Peter, was so indignant when he heard that so great a crime had been committed, that he ordered that the culprits should be torn to pieces by four horses, but was finally persuaded to hear what they had to allege in their defence. The most eminent advocates tendered their services, and Nicolas de Angelio, spoke with so much eloquence and learning, and produced such an effect that the Pope angrily exclaimed:

"What! not only among the nobility are men found to commit parricide, but among the advocates, eloquence to defend the accused. This we should never have believed, it was impossible for us to have conceived it."

Other jurts of equal ability followed this determined and zealous lawyer, to all of whom the Pope listened with great attention, and, after all had concluded, taking with him the papers, "made the night joint laborer with the day" till he had thoroughly examined the case, and resolved that, under all the circumstances, he would pardon the Cenci, but Rome was again convulsed by the news of the murder of the Marquis de Santa Croce, who was killed by his son, Paul, because he refused to make him the heir to his estates. This last crime determined the Pontiff to show no indulgence to the Cenci family, and on the 10th of September, 1599, he intimated to the Governor of Rome that justice must be done on the parricides, and that they could expect no mercy in this world. The Chief of the Police hastened to the prison to acquaint the unhappy women with their fate. Lucretia received the news with the greatest fortitude, exhorted Beatrice to patience, and went to the chapel to seek support in the consolations of religion. Beatrice at first could not realize the horrors of her situation, and exclaimed:

"To die, to die thus unprepared, and on the scaffold, by the hands of the common executioner!"

Reason, however, soon returned, and as the Holy Father had allowed her to dispose of her property as she chose, she made a testament bequeathing it to pious uses.

The fatal moment had now arrived, and Beatrice and Lucretia prepared the mantle *and turban of sack*cloth in which her head is *so well known;* the Brotherhood of Mercy opened the gates of the prison to accompany the condemned to the scaffold. Bernardo was pardoned; and Giacomo, with breast bare, for he was to be torn with red hot pincers, on his way to the scaffold. Beatrice and Lucretia mounted the cart which was to convey them to the place of execution. Lucretia was the first to suffer, and as she mounted the scaffold exclaimed:

"My God, have mercy on me! and do you, my brothers here seated, pray in pity for my soul!"

Beatrice next followed, and she said to the executioner who approached to tie her hands:

"God grant that you bind this body into corruption, but free my spirit unto eterna. life!"

The final absolution was given, and her head, like that of her stepmother, rolled upon the scaffold.

Giacomo alone survived of the three guilty ones, who had plotted a husband and father's death, and he was the last to expiate his crime. The unfortunate youth was made to kneel, his limbs were bound to a transverse beam upon the scaffold, his eyes bandaged, and his brains then dashed out with a hammer. Beatrice was buried in the church of San Pietro, in Montorio, which was formerly ornamented by Raphael's masterpiece of the Transfiguration (now transferred to the Vatican); a single word orate marks the spot where repose the remains of the ill-fated damsel.

Guido, the famous painter, drew the portrait of Beatrice Cenci, which is so well known by innumerable copies, either on her way to the scaffold or the night previous to her execution. This with five other originals from the hand of the same great master, now hangs in the gallery of the Barberini palace. The picture has thus been described by a famous French critic: "It is a beautiful head, ornamented by a turban, to which a dark velvet drapery is attached; the hair of glossy chestnut, dark eyes, within which the tear seems yet to tremble; a nose well formed, and mouth almost infantine; a complexion remarkably fair; the age about twenty-two. Close by this hangs the portrait of Lucretia, the very type of a Roman matron, in all her pride of beauty, the rich dark complexion, well defined features, straight nose, pencilled eyebrows, and expression at once commanding and tenderly voluptuous. A smile seems yet to linger on her lips, and her hair parted in rich curls upon her forehead, and falling luxuriantly around her face, seems its natural and becoming name."

Giacomo and Bernardo were both remark-

ably handsome; the latter strangely resembling his sister. After a detention of some months, he was set at liberfy, married and had a son, to whom he bequeathed his possessions, to whose daughter it descended; the family is now extinct.

Mrs. Jameson, in the "Diary of an Ennuyee," thus traces the genealogy of the celebrated and world renowed picture in the Barberini palace:

"The family of the Cenci was a branch of the house of Colonna, now extinct in the direct male line. The last prince, Colonna, left two daughters, co-heiresses, one of whom married the Prince Sciarra, the other the Prince Barberini. In this manner the portrait of Beatrice Cenci came into the Barberini family. The authenticity of this interesting picture has been disputed, but last night, after hearing the point extremely well contested by two intelligent men, I remained convinced of its authenticity."

The name of Catalina de Erauso has been mentioned in the text, and as she was one of the most singular characters in an age which produced so many whose adventures equal the wildest romance, we have thought that it might perhaps interest some of our readers if we appended a brief sketch of her most marvellous adventures.

Catalina de Erauso was born in the province of Guipuiscoa, February 10th, 1585. She was the daughter of an ancient but decayed family; and as there were no other means of providing for her, she was sent, when only four years old, to a convent, of which her aunt was prioress, and remained till fifteen in this seclusion, which was then almost intolerable. She longed for freedom like a caged eagle. About this time she had a quarrel with one of the nuns, by whom she was beaten severely; this insult which she could scarcely brook, made her residence in the convent still more irksome; but a crisis in her destiny, though she knew it not, was closer at hand than she supposed. One the 18th of March, 1600, her aunt sent her from the choir, where the community was then assembled at matins, to bring her breviary. Catalina obeyed, and there saw, what seemed to open the doors of her solitude, the keys of the convent. Her heart bounded within her, and her blood bubbled through her veins. There lay the keys of the convent, liberty and freedom were almost within her grasp. She returned to the chapel, made some excuse, begged permission to retire, which was granted, and again visited her aunt's cell, where she possessed herself of some money, a needle, and *bread, and a pair of scissors.* Leaving her scapulary behind her, she opened the convent gates, and was free. She walked briskly forward till she reached a chestnut grove, where she remained three days, converting her black woollen conventual dress into a page's attire, meanwhile subsisting on roots and grass. She arrived at Vittoria and entered the service of her uncle, to whom she was unknown. She had scarcely remained there three months, when one evening she was alarmed at hearing her father's voice asking for his relative; and when he came begging his aid to pursue and rescue his daughter. This was enough, Catalina's resolution was taken, and before daybreak, having previously made a contract with a muleteer, was on the road to Bilboa. She remained between two and three years in different parts of Spain, and the caprice seized her of visiting the convent; saw her mother, and even spoke to some of the nuns, who, not recognizing her, considered her as a "youth, well-dressed, and fashionable (*bien vestido y Galan*); her wanderings were not yet at an end. She reached San Lucar la Mayor, where a fleet was equipped against the Dutch, and on the point of sailing. Catalina joined the expedition, taking passage in the ship commanded by her uncle, and arrived safely in America, where she deserted, after having robbed her kinsman of twenty-five dollars.

After the fleet was safely on its way to Spain, the adventuress attained employment with Don Juan de Ibara; but he was a miser, and his arrogance disgusted her; she quitted his service, to enter that of Don Juan de Urquiza, who had a large commercial establishment, at Truxillo, and left Panama, where she was shipwrecked, and with the greatsst difficulty, saved both herself and her master, who in return for her fidelity, made her his chief agent at Sana.

Here she might have been happy, but unfortunately had a quarrel, with a man of the name of Reyes, who swore that he would cut her face; as Reyes was coming out of church the next day, Catalina sprang upon him, with a sharp knife, and gashed his face; a friend came to his assistance, and Catalina drawing her sword, wounded her new antagonist, and then dreading the consequences, took refuge in the nearest church but the coregidor not thinking that a sufficient sanctuary, ordered that an armed force, should be sent to arrest her, and she was lodged in prison, whence she was liberated by the exertions of Urquiza, whom she joined at Truxillo; but unfortunately, a fresh quarrel arose between Catalina and the man she had wounded before; a contest ensued, she stabbed her adversary to the heart, and took refuge in the Cathedral of

Truxillo; Urquiza, who really had an affection for this strange being, whom he believed a man, furnished her with letters of recommendation to a friend in Lima, in whose family she became domesticated, and even went so far as to pay her addresses to the daughter of her host; the father of the young lady was willing, and even named a day for the celebration of the nuptials; to elude the importunities of the family, she quitted Lima, for La Concepcion, and enlisted in a company then forming in Chili; and to her great surprise, found that her brother Miguel de Erauso, who had quitted Spain, to better his fortunes in the new world, was her captain; he was fifteen years her senior, and attracted by the frank bearing of Don Ramirez de Gusman (the name Catalina then bore,) and considering her as a youth, separated from his friends, and native land, paid her some attention; at the battle of Puren, she showed great bravery, threw herself into the thickest of the fight, saw the banner of Spain floating at a distance, in the possession of the enemy, and swore thas she would recapture it, and cut her way to the *cacique*, who held the Spanish flag; her companion was stricken to the earth, with a death wound, but the dauntless woman pressed on alone, attacked the *cacique*, and wrested the prize from his hand, at the same time wounding him mortally; she herself did not escape uninjured, she had been struck by three arrows, wounded in the side by a lance, and had a sabre cut on one of her legs; her valor in this engagement, won her the title of Alferez or ensign; when peace was restored, she returned to Concepcion, and resided there awhile.

Catalina's nature was fiery, she loved play, and its excitement; one day being at a gambling house, [illegible]e and the banker, had a quarrel about the color of a card; and the man applied to her an opprobious epithet; Catalina pale with rage, exclaimed:

"Dare to repeat that word!"

The offensive expression was again uttered, and the sword of his opponent was buried in his bosom, the auditor of Chili, a young Spaniard of noble birth, ordered Catalina to leave the room; she treated the command with contempt, it was reiterated, and the officer seized her by the doublet, to enforce his authority; this was more than she could bear, she stabbed the auditor in the face, and before any one could stop her, had quitted the building; to protect herself, she sought sanctuary in the cathedrel, and adjoining convent of St. Francis; the governor, who heard of the outrage, *did not venture to drag* her out by force, but *blockaded the convent*, where she remained for six months; she was exceedingly tired of her solitude, and bitterly complained of it, to a friend, who came to visit her, and asked her to become his second in a duel, to which Catalina agreed, and was at the rende-vous at the hour appointed; a difficulty arose between herself and the second of the opposite party, high words were exchanged, and the dispute could only be settled by the sword; a duel was the result, Catalina escaped uninjured, but her opponent was mortally wounded, and asked for a priest, leaning over, Catalina by the moonlight, recognized her brother, who in his last moments accused her of his death; this fresh crime so displeased the governor, that he summoned the monks to surrender their guest, but the brotherhood jealous of their privileges refused; and eight more months were passed in what was to the unfortunate woman the most fearful of all punishments, inaction.

A friend, Don Juan Ponce de Leon, resolved to facilitate her escape, but it was necessary that she should cross the great desert of the Andes—at all times a fearful solitude—but the very thought of which would make the gayest shiver and discourage the most resolute; but supplied with a moderate sum of money and a horse, Catalina departed on her perilous journey. After making a little progress, she met two soldiers on horseback with whom she joined company. The soil was arid, and for miles not even a tuft of vegetation relieved the eye. The cold was intense, and to add to their other trials water and provisions began to fail. The horses were jaded, and they proceeded on foot. One of her companions suddenly uttered a shout, and exclaimed that he saw a man. Catalina approached, perceived that they were Indians, and addressed them in the language of the country, but they neither moved nor spoke—they were frozen to death. One of her companions succumbed to the cold, the other and Catalina were the sole tenants of this frightful solitude. Still she persevered in her journey. Her remaining companion likewise fell a victim to the climate, and she was alone, and records in her journal that, the first time for twenty-eight years, she wept bitterly. Drying her tears, she approached the body, took all the money she could find, and continued her journey.

"Recommending myself to the holy Mother of God and St. Joseph, her glorious spouse," she safely entered Tucuman, but, as usual, her restless disposition did not allow her long to be at peace with those among whom she dwelt, and, after a sojourn of some months, quitted the kingdom after a quarrel, in which she slew her adversary, and proceeded to Pa-

cobamba, where, in a contest with a Portuguese merchant, she slew him, was imprisoned, racked, and condemned to be hanged. Even at the gallows, her courage did not forsake her, and she said to the executioner, who was bungling with the rope, "Put it well on, or let me alone," but as she was about to be put to death, a pardon arrived, and she was set at liberty.

Tiring of her sojourn here, she proceeded to Cuzco, where she was apprehended, and subjected to an imprisonment of five months, on the suspicion of having murdered the viceroy. The real culprit was found, and she was released. With exceedingly bitter feelings, she again resumed her reckless manner of living.

There was then a young man in the city, who, from his winning address and great personal beauty, was called "the new Cid." For this person Catalina had a great aversion, and displayed her hatred on every possible occasion. The cid approached her one evening at a gaming-table, and, whether from accident or design, placed his hand on Catalina's gold. At first she paid no attention, and continued her game, but the manoeuvre had not escaped her notice, she suddenly drew a dirk and pinned the hand of her adversary to the table. "Let no one come near me," said she, with a bitter smile; "he meant to rob me, and I punished him." Numbers, however, overpowered her, and, ere she reached the door, Catalina was severely wounded. Still she did not despair. Her friends rallied around her, as did the cid's companions around him, and it was agreed that all should go to a more retired spot where they might fight it out at their leisure, but on the way the cid sprang upon Catalina and stabbed her in the shoulder, at the same instant one of the cid's adherents wounded her in the side, the blood gushed out in torrents, she fell to the ground and fainted.

The battle continued over her prostrate body; and when this bold and desperate woman opened her eyes she saw the cid looking at her with a smile. This was more than she could bear, and, stung to the soul by the look of haughty triumph, by a masterly effort collected her strength, dragged herself to her feet, and, slowly rising, confronted her enemy. "Ah," said he, "you are still alive!" and raised his hand to smite her, but she was too quick, and, eluding the blow, drew her stiletto and stabbed him to the heart.

Catalina was, however, more seriously injured than she dreamed, and, when, on a sick bed, revealed the secret of her sex, *sub sigillo confessionis*, to a Dominican monk. For five months she lingered, and at last resolved on quitting Cuzco in a litter to visit Guamanga that she might consult the Bishop who then held the crozier of that see, and who had a high reputation throughout Spanish America for learning, mildness, and piety.

She safely arrived at the place of her destination, having baffled the *alguazils en route*, but though she had gone to Guamanga expressly to consult the Bishop, she could not make up her mind to see the prelate she had come so far to visit. Her situation was, however, critical, and orders had been sent to the mayor for her arrest; but Catalina was determined to die rather than fall into the hands of justice. The Bishop, who happened to be in the vicinity, interfered; and it was agreed that his palace should for the time be a prison. The ex-nun confessed all to the venerable prelate, who gave her absolution on the condition that she should resume the habit of her sex and enter a religious house. To this she consented, and selected the Convent of Santa Clara. She was then twenty-eight.

On the death of the Bishop of Guamanga, which occurred shortly after, she was sent to Lima, by the orders of the Archbishop, and on her arrival at that city was received with the greatest distinction, and permitted to choose in what convent she would reside. After a trial of each for five days, she fixed upon that of Santa Trinidad, of the order of St. Bernard, where she remained for two years, at the expiration of which time she was informed that she was at liberty to leave the convent, if she had not yet taken the veil, and would pledge herself to live in the world with a proper regard fof her religious duties.

Her resolution was taken, she quitted America and sailed for Spain. During the voyage she had a quarrel at play, was forced to leave the ship in which she had originally embarked, and finish the voyage in another. The first of November, 1624, she landed at Cadiz, and as the fame of her wonderful story had preceded her, the crowd, pressed on her, exclaiming, *La monja alferez*, *La monja alferez*, (the nun ensign).

She was anxious to visit Rome, and taking Madrid in her way, went to Pampaluna, crossed a part of the French territory. On her arrival at Piedmont she was robbed, arrested, imprisoned, and compelled to return to Spain, where she presented a memorial to Philip the Fourth, asking assistance and compensation for her military services. Her claims were referred to the council of the judges, who, after a due examination, granted her a pension of eighteen hundred ducats, and the permission to call herself "The Ensign Dona Catalina de Erauso."

This matter accomplished to her satisfaction she departed for Rome, which she reached safely, and where she was magnificently entertained, dining every day with one of the cardinals, and presented to the Pope, to whom she handed a petition, craving the privilege of wearing man's attire, to which Urban VIII., who sat in the chair of Peter, consented, at the same time admonishing her that she was to use no offensive weapons, respect the image of God in her neighbor, and fear the vengeance of the Almighty. She returned to Spain in 1626, after having visited Naples, and excited everywhere the most intense curiosity. In 1630, Catalina returned to America, but the date of her death is uncertain; just before her departure, she sat to the celebrated Pacheco at Seville, and this portrait was in 1830, in the possession of Colonel Sheppler at Aix la Chapelle. It is a very curious fact in the history of this extraordinary woman, that throughout her chequered career she never lost her purity, or was betrayed into the excesses which might have been expected from the vices and disorders of a soldier's life.

Don Maria de Ferrer, who edited her journal, proved her existence by the most incontestable documents, and the celebrated Spanish dramatist, Don Juan Perez de Montalban, wrote a comedy in three acts, entitled "*La Monja Alferez.*"

The reign of Henry the Eighth, though marked by the execution of some of the greatest men that England ever produced, was also noted for the patronage which the fine arts received from that monarch. Henry had a great love of the beautiful, and courted the society of learned men, so gay and fastidious a court could not be without an artist, and we find Hans Holbein, born in 1495, at Gundstaldt, receiving the salary of court painter, and held in high esteem by his royal master. This artist, who was the son of an artist, early manifested great ability both in landscapes and portraits, but not receiving at Bale, where he had settled, the patronage to which he thought his talents entitled; the artist laid his case before Erasmus, who recommended him to seek his fortune at the English court, and presented him with a letter to Sir Thomas More. All the nobles of that day flocked to the easel of the German painter, who though living in the atmosphere of a court, was, at times, blunt and unpolished, even to rudeness; and one day expelled a marquis from his studio, who complained to the king of the *artist's rudeness.* "By God's splendor," replied bluff king Hal, "out of seven ploughmen, I can make seven lords, but I cannot make one Hans Holbein."

Some of the choieest works of this artist are in England, and a few in the Dresden gallery. As a colorist, he possessed great merit, and his heads are distinguished by fulness and force of expression. He is chiefly celebrated for his Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, and Anne Boleyn. In the reign of George the Second, a collection of drawings by this artist was discovered in Kensington Palace. Holbein also painted in distemper and miniature.

As an engraver he is chiefly celebrated for his "Dance of Death," a series of fifty-three woodcuts, though it is rare that more than forty-six are produced; this has frequently been engraved, but the finest are from the *atelier* of Wenzel Hollar. Holbein died of the plague in 1554; he always used the left hand in painting.

The events aecorded in the Black Crook are supposed to have transpired about the year 1700; the rage for alchemy, had prevailed in Europe more or less since the days of Paracelsus, and even the most enlightened were not free from a belief, in sorcery and witchcraft; the records of New England show that when the British emigrated to the New World, they brought the same belief with them.

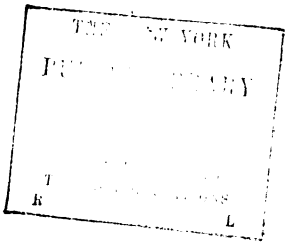
The Black Crook produced at the American Theatre, in Walnut Street, in Philadelphia, has rarely been equalled in the splendor of its scenery, its mechanical effects, and corps de ballet; the old steward, the Black Crook, the antiquated lady's maid, and Grepo, are unique creations.

In New York this piece was given to the public with great splendor, and an eminent artist, who visited the Empire City expressly to witness the representation of the Black Crook, declared that it was well worth fifty dollars and the trouble of the journey. For this the theatrical world are indebted to Chas. Barras, a celebrated actor, and well known scholar and author.

Both in New York and Philadelphia, all who have been in any way connected with the Black Crook deserve the greatest credit for their exertions.

A very faint conception of the unparalleled splendor of this matchless melodrama can be had from the perusal of the book. This great play, with all its wonderful effects, must be seen to be appreciated.

THE END.



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